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SHANMUKHA

IN FOCUS

Twenty one year old **SHANMUKHA** Wishes its Readers, Subscribers, Contributors, Advertisers and well wishers a very Happy New Year and Pongal.

With prayers for exploring new horizons and delving new depths in Fine Arts, **SHANMUKHA** brings to the readers some rays of research on Saint Tyagaraja. The Tyagaraja theme is a perennial fount for musicians and musicologists to seek knowledge, to draw inspiration and to lead a righteous life. Only A few Kshetras did he visit but what lessons he taught in the path of devotion! His Pancharatnas - Ghana Raga, Kovur, Tiruvotriyur, Lalgudi And Srirangam - have all gained prominence. But what still remained dormant were the Tiruvayyaru Kshetra Kritis. A Vidyalyaya staffer, a Vainika-Gayaka Vidwan, delves deep into it and shares her Experience of study and rendition with readers.

The supremacy of Ramabhakti Samrajya and the great qualities of Sri Rama are crisply summed up in "Oka Mata, Oka Bana, Oka Patni" and the theme is found convincingly scanned in a thesis by a great scholar in Sanskrit and music. Yet another admirer of the saint describes him as the "Everest of music", the pinnacle of pure music.

SHANMUKHA seeks new avenues for propagating musical knowledge and musical experience. "Jugalbandhi" as a means of integrating musical systems has caught up with artistes. Connoisseurs and critics have time and again expressed their views and comments. but here is an artiste who records her thrill and the challenges when on the stage.

With examinations round the corner, **SHANMUKHA** offers students of music some lessons on gharanas from an eminent musician-musicologist-journalist, and on Tala Perspectives-a comparative study of Hindustani and Karnatak systems- from a Veteran Mridangist-Vocalist.

The Sangita Kalanidhi of the year does a "Laya Vinyasa" in his presidential address. The Evergreen "Isai Tamizh" takes you on an interesting facet of music. And with solemn reverence, **SHANMUKHA** pays a touching tribute to a great Mridangam Vidwan In "Stilled Avarthanam".

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TIRUVAYYARU KSHETRA KRITIS

By Kalyani Sharma

The season of Aradhana is fast approaching. Once again would the multitude of musicians surge towards that fertile Kaveri belt to pay homage to the bard of Tiruvayyaru from whose vision and voice gushed forth hundreds of songs elevating the humanity on Bhakti Marga and enlightening the people on the munificence of music.

Every Aradhana brings with it new hopes and newer horizons as Saint Tyagaraja's creations, collectively and singularly, open up new vistas of musical insight for the musicians and reveal the heart that revelled in Bhakti, in "Rama Bhakti", conquering a vast Samrajya

Musical Poet

One of the Trinity of Music, Saint Tyagaraja stands among the Vaggeyakaras and musicians of Karnatak music as 'a single genius who reached the common man with lofty music and touched his heart.' In his compositions, Raga, Tala, Bhava, philosophy, poetry, the science and art of music, the Sangita Siddhanta and over and above aesthetics and Bhakti found a natural confluence. And he showed the path of Nadopasana as a sure way to Moksha. His compositions, like, *Nadōpasana* (Begada), *Swararagasudharasa* (Sankarabharanam) *Nadasudharasam* (Arabhi) etc., bring out the essence of this musical Sadhana.

Tyagaraja was a born genius. Sangeetha Lakshana and Lakshya flowed in his veins. Even as a boy he mastered the grammar, the Srutis, Murchanas, Gamakas, the Janaka-Janya Ragas, from the family treasures, *Naradeeyam*, *Natya Sastra*, *Sangita Ratnakara*, etc., hande

down by his maternal great grandfather Giriraja Kavi.

More. The Saint channeled through Nada, the manifold forms of devotion, the "Navavidha Bhakti", viz.,

- i. SRAVANAM : Constant listening to the glory of the Lord.
- ii. KIRTANA : Singing the praise of the Lord.
- iii. SMARANA : Constant memory of the Lord and meditating upon him.
- IV. PADASEVANA : Worship of the Lord's feet in many ways.
- IV. ARCHANA : Worship of the Lord through Puja ritual.
- Vi. VANDANAM : Paying obeisance to the Lord.
- vii. DASYA : Worshipping the Lord as the Master, imagining oneself as servant.
- viii. SAKHYA : Worshipping the Lord like one's friend.
- ix. .ATMANIVEDANAM : Surrender of one's self to the Lord as the Lord's own.

In the field of Karnatak music Saint Tyagaraja was the only composer who could be called a poet besides Sangita Pitamaha Sri Purandaradasa and Kshetragna. For his poetic excellence he was even called the great Musical Poet of Tiruvayyaru. He was blessed with the darshan of Saint Narada who gifted him the invaluable treatise on music called *Swararnavam*.

Since Tyagaraja was an *atma jnani* who had realised the soul and a great Bhakta devoted to Lord through Nadopasana, each and every composition of his shines like a Jewel in the Crown. Through simple Telugu the Nadayogi propounded the great philosophy of Upanishads, Gita, Ramayana and Bhagavatham in music. His Kritis thus are

aptly called "Tyagabrahmopanishad". The operas he composed, *Bhakta Prahlada Vijayam* and *Nauka Charitram*, reveal his genius and scholarship.

Content as he was with his Rama Dhyana, the worship of his Ishta Devata, he was least interested in pilgrimage. "Rama Dhyaname Varamai Ganga Snamamu" he sang, expressing his conviction. Yet, persuaded by his mentor and disciples, he undertook a short pilgrimage to Kshetras like Kovur, Tiruvotriyur, Tirupati, Lalgudi, Srirangam and Nagapatnam and composed Kritis on all the presiding deities there with equal fervour and devotion. It should be mentioned here that Bhakti Bhava that is welling up in these Kritis is no way less than that in the Kritis on Lord Rama, for he saw Lord Rama in all deities.

When he visited Kanchi at the invitation of "Upanishad Brahman" the noble Sanyasin and Rama Bhakta, Tyagaraja composed two songs on Varadaraja and also one on Goddess Kamakshi.

His Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kritis are well known and widely sung in the music world. Apart from these when he visited Thiruvotriyur, he had composed five songs on Goddess Tripuransundari. Similarly, at Kovur he had composed five Kritis on Lord Sundareshwara. His sojourn to Tirupati and his famous outpourings at the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Venkatramana are too well known to need reiteration. The holy places of Srirangam and Lalgudi too had their share of Pancharatnas each on the presiding deities of Sri Ranganatha, Saptarishiswara and Pravridha Srimathi respectively.

While these Kshetra Pancharatnas have somewhat gained prominence what remained untapped and needed to be brought to light were the Kshetra Kritis of Tiruvayyaru where the Saint lived right from his childhood to attaining his Samadhi. He composed several Kritis on the

deities of Tiruvayyaru -- Lord Panchanadhiswara and his consort Dharma Samvardhini. Some of his contemporaries remarked that he was a devotee of only Lord Rama and that he did not worship Shiva. Little did they know that the Saint was no fanatic but revered all deities of Hindu religion, and that he saw Rama in each one. The Kritis bear testimony to this prolific composer's reverence to all Gods.

Following are the Saint's Tiruvaiyyaru Kshetra Kritis:-

1. DARSANAMU SEYA NA THARAMA - Narayanagowlai
2. ILALO PRANATHARTHI - Atana
3. YEHI TRIJAGADISA - Saranga
4. EVARUNNARU - Malavasri
5. MUTHSATA BRAHMA - Madhyamavathi
6. AMMA DHARMASAMVARDINI - Atana
7. NANNUGANNATHALLI - Kesari
8. BALE BALENDU - Ritigowla
9. NIVUBROVALENAMMA - Saveri
10. PARASAKTHIMANU - Saveri
11. KARUNAJOODAVAMMA - Todi
12. VIDHICHAKRADULAKU - Yamuna Kalyani
13. SIVE PAHIMAM - Kalyani
14. AMBA NINNU NAMMITI - Arabhi

The Kritis *Darsanamu* in Narayanagowlai reveals Tyagaraja's reverence to Lord Shiva. In the "Signature-charana" of this Kritis he sings:

*Hataka Sambaina adhbhuthakrutini ne
Nata Jesikoni Hrunnaleekamunanu
Mati Matiki Juchi maimarachiyundedi
Atala Tyagarajarchita Supada Siva.*

"Is it a child's play to install your glorious and beautiful golden figure in the lotus of my heart and forget myself in constant vision of it?"

Yehi Trijagadisa is set in simple lyrics, in flowing language, in Sanskrit. This

is an example for "Kirtanam", one of the Navavidha Bhakti. *Parasaktimanu* in Saveri shines in the Beauty of Anuprasa.

Sive Pahimam in Kalyani Raga is yet another example of a Kritis for beauty in Prasa.

Nannugannathalli na bhagyama (Kesari) stands out as an example for a kritis in Apoorva Raga.

"*Vidhi chakradulaku*" in Yamuna Kalyani is resplendent with the beauty of poetic excellence.

"*Vidhi Chakradulaku Dorakuna? Idu Vanti Sannidhi? Vedukajuthamurare*"

Sudheejanarakshaki Dharmambudhisayee Seva Juda"

"Oh! Dharmambika! Protector and refuge of the wise! Supreme Mother! Is it possible for Brahma, Indra and other Gods to have a Darsana of your grand Sukravara Seva?"

And goes on in the Charana extolling the beauty of Goddess in Sinhasana wherein she throws her glances in compassion on the damsels with unparalleled beauty who dance in her Court and on the Devas who in utter surrender prostrate on the ground in Her presence. Sri Tyagaraja's description of the above is the pinnacle of artistic creation.

In the Charanam of *Karunajoodavamma* in Todi, Sri Tyagaraja reiterates his equal reverence to all deities thus -- "oh! Parasakthi! Please do not abandon Tyagaraja who constantly proclaim to the whole world that Purushottama Rama, the Cosmic Siva and Yourself are one and the same".

It can be said that the Saint's Tiruvayyaru Kshetra Kritis make a unique "bunch" among his Samudaya Kritis. When I learnt these first and delved deep into

them for a special performance* certain rare qualities and facts surfaced:

- i) These Kritis are slightly different from the Saint's other compositions in the sense that they are somewhat weighty and deeper in musical aspect with masterly style and diction.
- ii) Kritis like *Karuna Joodavamma*, *Neevubrovala*, *Amma Dharmasamvardhini*, soaked in Bhakti Bhava are in nature akin to the Kritis on Goddess Kamakshi composed by Sri Syama Sastri. They create a feeling of our being drawn closer to the Universal mother.
- iii) Unlike his other Kritis set in the simple Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam sequence, these kritis are composed more in the style of Dikshitar's Kritis in Vilamba kala with Pallavi, Anupallavi, Charanam and Madyama Kala Sahityam and are of intellectual variety.
- iv) In some Kritis, the Eduppu in Tala varies from place to place which adds beauty and grandeur to the composition. For instance, in the 4th and 5th Avarthana of Charanam of the Atana Kritis *Amma Dharmasamvardini* there is a beautiful blending of 1/2 eduppu and Sama Eduppu in Drutham meshing with Sahitya. This combination makes it more mellifluous and spontaneous. Similarly, in the Pallavi of Ritigowla Kritis *Bale Balendu* the Tala Eduppus flow like Sangatis in succession giving it a special effect.

Such Kritis of Tyagaraja enrich our musical heritage and add a great treasure of immeasurable value to the world of Karnatak Music. One can grasp easily through these Kritis Raga Sancharas Sahitya Vinyasa, Laya variation and improve one's Manodharma

Like precious pearls embedded in the deep sea - bed, there may still be many more gems of Saint Tyagaraja in the unfathomable ocean of music. It will be a noble work, for helping future generations and preserving for posterity if present day vidwans and artistes undertook research and brought forth many such gems to vogue.

* A special feature of "Tiruvayyaru Kshetra Kritis" was broadcast in early 1994 by AIR, Bombay, as part of the 147th Tyagaraja Aradhana celebrations.

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TYAGARAJA AND THE RAMAYANAS OTHER THAN VALMIKI'S

By Dr. V. Raghavan

As a leading Rama-devotee and a major Rama-composer, Tyagaraja was steeped in the traditions, texts and tenets of Rama-worship. The Ganga of Rama bhakti that rose out of Valmiki grew into a mighty river gathering further currents as it spread over the Puranas and the Upapuranas¹. In addition to the Puranas, special accounts of Rama-stories came into being, some of them calling themselves Ramayana, e.g., the *Adhyatma*, *Adbhuta* and *Ananda Ramayanas*². Divergences from Valmiki, variations on the themes, and also additional episodes and details not found in Valmiki, gained vogue and became part and parcel of the Rama Epos. The Ramayana in the popular languages of the different parts of India reflect and embody a good deal of these variations. Tyagaraja, whose songs are concentrated on Rama, had all this heritage of Rama literature. I have already drawn attention in *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja* to some of the extra-Valmiki allusions in Tyagaraja's songs. Recently I came across some more for which the inspiration must have come pointedly from the *Ananda Ramayana* and the less known but older *Bhusundi Ramayana*.

1. There is the well-known song in Harikambhoji *Oka mata yoka banamu oka patnivrata* in which Tyagaraja highlights three great qualities that distinguished Rama, namely, keeping his word, unfailing arrow, and being devoted to his single wedded wife. These are put in words that would strike one as being very effective, namely, 'the man of one word, one arrow and one wife'. No doubt, all these three qualities are in Valmiki, at more than one place and in different contexts: Rama to Kaikeyi (II 18.30): *Ramo Dvirnābhi bhashate* and "Satyavakya" any number of times. Kaikeyi's tribute to Rama on his

Ekapatnivrata (II.72.49) is well known and the epithet "*Ekapatnivrataadhara*" for Rama is common in other accounts of Rama, in the Mahabharata and the Puranas. So too, the unfailing arrow of Rama and his killing with a single arrow receive general description in more than one place in Valmiki. But it is only the *Ananda Ramayana* which puts these 'three ones' together and in the same striking manner as we find it later in Tyagaraja; and the *Ananda* does so at least in five places. First, at the end of the first book which narrates the whole story of the Epic, and concludes with sum-up of Rama-rajya and Rama's great qualities. The *Ananda* says (I.13.6):

*Yasaikameva Tachchasa Patni
Vaakyam Sharastatha*"

"For whom there was only one, - wife, word and arrow".

In Book IV ("Vilasakanda") canto 7, Vyasa praises Ramarajya as unparalleled and Rama tells Vyasa that he stood by three principles; he gave a word once and stood by it; beyond Sita, all women he considered as his mother; if he wanted to kill a person, he aimed his arrow only once.

*Maya Trayaha Krutaha Santi niyama
munisattam /*

*Mukhadvinirgatam Vakyamekameva
Vinishchitam /*

*Na Kriyate mrusha tachcha nauchyate
haparam purnaha /*

*Anyaseetham Vinakanya Stree
Kausalyasadhashi mama //*

*Tathaham ghatumichami Banenaikena
Kopataha //*

*Nihanyate Tadaikena Nanyam Banam
Sujamyaham //11-14*

In book VII (Rajyakanda) part I, Canto 3, there is an exchange between a wor-

1. I have surveyed the Rama-stories in the Puranas and Upapuranas in my book "*The Greater Ramayana*" (All India Kasi Raja Trust, Varanasi).

2. Surveyed by me in a series of lectures in the University of Bombay.

shipper of Rama and one of Krishna as to the comparative greatness of the two incarnations and the Ramopasaka says: "For my Rama, there is only one word, one arrow, one woman not so for your Krishna."

Mē Rāmasya Vachakshveka Satya vacha Nanyatha /

*Ramasya me Sharastveka
Shatannirdalanakshamaha!
Eka Stree mama Ramasya II 89-91*

Again, in part II of the Rajyakanda, Canto 21, Rama Himself speaks about the purpose of His incarnation as Rama and the lessons He holds up for the world; and while doing so, points out the speciality of Ramavatara as these "three ones".

*Yatra Satyavratam Meyasti Yatrai-
kadayitavratham I*

*Yatraikēnaiva Banena Maya Vālyadika
hataha II*

*Yatraikaiva hi Seetaya mama Shayya
na chapara II 72-3 -*

The fourth time this comes up in the same terms is in the next Book (IX) canto 3 where the two incarnations Rama and Krishna are said to be best and of the two, Rama is superior because of the 'three ones'.

*Dashavataram adhyeyapi
Ramakrishnau Mahatmau I*

*Tāmyāmapī varaha poorvaha
Satyasandho Raghoottamaha II*

*Eka-patnivrato Veerastvekabano
Nripottamaha I 29-30*

This way of referring to these three qualities in a series had become more or less a formula of Rama-mahatmya and Tulasidas also speaks of this 'Ekavachana ekabana ekapatni' in the song *Dinako Dayal* in the Vinayapatrika. Tyagaraja must

have followed this practice when he sang his 'Oka mata'.

2. Tyagaraja considered the Rama-incarnation as the best of the ten incarnations and as the "Purnavatara". In 'Madi lona' (Kolahala) Tyagaraja says: 'Padi veshamulo Ramaveshamu bahu baganuchu' and in 'Raghupate' (Sahana), third Charana, he describes Rama as 'Paripurnavatara'. The conception of Rama as the 'Purnavatara' is emphatically stated, more than once, in the *Ananda Ramayana*. In the contexts referred to above making the mention of the three great qualities, Eka-vakya, Eka-bana and Eka-patni, is justify the superiority of Ramavatara as the full and best incarnation that the *Ananda* speaks of those qualities. The most elaborate statement of this is what Rama Himself makes in the third context quoted above (VII, 21). After reviewing His earlier incarnations Rama says:

*Nanena Saddashaha Kashchidavatara
Mahitale I*

*Poorva bhooto Mamāgreyapi na
Bhavishyati vai kada II*

★ ★ ★ ★

*Yatra Satyavratam meyasti
yatraikadayitavratham,*

*Yatraikēnaiva Bānēna naya
Vālyadika hataha*

*Yatraikaiva hi Seetaya nama shayya
na chapara/*

★ ★ ★ ★

*Ata Evāavataroyam
Poornaroopanmaya dhrutaha II*

*Bhoota Bhavyavatara ye teyashādeva
maya dhrutaha II*

The idea of Rama avatara as 'Purna' and the rest, including Krishna, as 'Amsa' is also declared repeatedly in the *Bhusundi Ramayana*. The argument between the worshippers of Rama and Krishna in *Anan-*

da IX 3, already quoted, reiterates the same idea.

3. In his *Sarasa-sāma-dāna* (Kapinarayani), in which Tyagaraja praises Rama's expert handling of the four policies of Sama, Dana, Bheda and Danda, he mentions that Rama even offered Ayodhya to Ravana; that is, if after the promise of bestowal of Lanka on Vibhishana, Ravana would surrender, Rama would ask Bharata to give away Ayodhya to Ravana. I had always taken this as an original flash of the imagination of Tyagaraja. But recently I found that this idea is found in quite an elaborate statement in the *Bhusundi Ramayana*, a source of Tulsidas, and one of the important Ramayanas depicting the Prema-bhakti aspect of the Rama-cult. It is in Book III of the *Bhusundi Ramayana* after the episode of the Nagapasa cast by Indrajit and the visit of Garuda to remove the Nagapasa, Rama is discussing the battle-strategy with Sugriva and other leading monkeys, on the Suvela mountain.

Sugriva has a doubt which he places before Rama:

"Lord, you have promised Lanka to Vibhishana; suppose Ravana now surrenders, what will you do!"

Rama replies:

"I will hand over Ayodhya to Vibhishna".

Although there is a slight difference as to which of the two Rakshasa brothers Rama will bestow Ayodhya upon, the basic idea is there in the *Bhusundi Ramayana*. This shows how wide Tyagaraja's acquaintance with Rama-literature was; he must have listened to and learnt all this from those well versed in these writings. For, mss of the *Bhusundi Ramayana* are very few and the text had been eclipsed somewhat by the appearance of the *Adhyatma, Adbhuta and Ananda Ramayanas*.

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TRIMURTHIS OF KARNATAK MUSIC

By Dr. K. J. Iyengar

The Trimurtis of Karnatak Music - Syama Sasthigal (1762), Tyagaraja Swamigal (1767) and Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775) were contemporaries who made history in the evolution of music. The trio had their birth and breeding in Tiruvarur in the Kaveri deltaic district of Tanjavur, famous for its 'Bhani' in Karnatak Music and for Bharatanatyam.

Music, a Source of Reform

They used Nadopasana as a Yoga for attaining *Aparoksha*. They were born Adwaitins, and evidence is strewn all over the *Sahitya* of Tyagaraja to indicate that he was a Visishtadwaitin by conviction. Be that as it may, the motto of the Trinity was 'to be in and yet out of the world'. They could well have led a life of seclusion and cloistered contemplation minding their own artistic and spiritual business, ultimately shuffling off this mortal coil, but they were imbued with the laudable ideal of democratising music by their soul-stirring Kritis for the uplift and reformation of the evil-stricken humanity. By their profound and prolific production, their period is known as 'the Golden age of Karnatak Music'. Out of nearly 2000 Kritis of Tyagaraja, only 685 have come down to posterity and barely half that number is current! Syama Sastri, the oldest of the three, has authored over a hundred Kritis but only 44 survive. Muthuswami Dikshitar, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, has to his credit about 450 pieces of which 400 are extant. Many kudos for his disciples who wrote down almost all he composed.

Dikshitar's creations have a vast canvas, like Tolstoi's, with generally a slow but majestic tempo and measured melody, highlighting Bhava Suddha, in spite of a clustered and involved phraseology. He appealed more to the intellect than emo-

tion. His Kamalamba Navaavarnam, Thyagaraja Ashtaka, Panchalinga and Navagraha Kritis form a serried rank of tantalising bunches of great charm, soothing colours, variegated hues and haunting fantasy, begging description. His was 'Vedic Sahitya' unlike the 'Loukika' Sanskrit of Kalidasa and others.

Tyagaraja's ruling passion was RAMA who, according to legend, had given him darshan thrice. Tyagaraja poured forth his bursting heart in chiselled bits of Suddha Bhakti touching the entire gamut of human emotions. His Pancharatna Kritis reach the acme of perfection in rhythm, melody and elongated but intricate architectonics.

Syama Sastri had his own speciality in striking a middle path between the Sahitya Pradhana music of Dikshitar and the lyrical outpourings of Tyagaraja. He was a devotee of Devi on the 'son-mother' basis and his pieces on Ambal variously named Kamakshi, Shyamalambika, Kamalambika etc., are ecstatic and exuberant. It is like a transparent running brook, purifying all that comes in. Sastri offered in power-packed capsules the intricate worth and the concentrated tonic of his two comperes. No wonder, there are a few critics and connoisseurs of Karnatak Music who unhesitatingly vote for Sasthigal.

The Everest of Karnatak Music

Tyagabrahmam, the towering genius, is the Everest of Karnatak Music and reaches the very pinnacle of pure music, transcending all barriers. His life is a long symphony of enduring fascination - music and melody, trials and tribulations, throbs and thrills; garland after garland of Ganarasa, cascade after cascade of Nada Suddha Rasa - we are verily at a loss for words to portray with precision the life and teachings of Tyagaraja Swamigal.

Tyagaraja carried on the Bhajana traditions established by Sadasiva Brah-mendral of Nerur, Bhodendra Thirtha of Govindapuram, Iyyaval Swamigal of Thiruvisanallur and Marudanallur Swamigal.

Bhajans of Tyagaraja gradually encompassed the multitude and inspired them to participate individually and collectively. His daily *Unchavritti* further extended its orbit and expanded his scope. This indeed is his significant contribution to his fellowmen. None could stand aloof from his rapturous sway and the swing of his *Utsavasampradaya* Kritis.

No voluminous biography nor any elaborate treatise on his Kritis can do adequate justice to the peculiar beauties of his songs celestial, the pellets of thoughts, the poignancy and permanence of his masterpieces, his rapiers of wit and wisdom, his simple and sweet words capturing even the most uncultivated mind a thing of mystical magnetism, a joy perennial, beyond expression. They can only be enjoyed; hardly can they be explained nor is there any need to do so.

Need for Translation

It is parlous that in these days of interminable talk day in and day out throughout this country of national, cultural and emotional integration, Tyagaraja is a closed book in most parts of Bharat. Not many of his Kritis have been translated into the regional languages for understanding his message nor are they learnt in their chaste original Telugu for sheer enjoyment all over the country.

As a Western admirer of the sage of Thiruvannamalai said: "To see Ramana is to see ancient and eternal India". So is the case with the Trinity, much more so with Tyagaraja, the keystone in the arch of Karnatak Music.

He has much to give to those who really seek. He strode above power and pelf. We

pray that there will be more and more seekers of Love, Truth and Beauty, in spiritual terms, which make this mundane and matter-of-fact life worth living not only in the South but no less in the north, west and east.

Anachronistic chauvinism of our present-day politics has not spared even Tyagaraja and unfortunately even in the south there are voices heard raising the bogey of language against the pure music and transcendental Bhakti of Tyagaraja. Indian culture is an amalgam of all the best known to mankind: Unity in diversity and diversity in unity. *Thyagabrahmopanishad* is a humanising force of universal sweep, beyond compare, in the realm of music and we must be proud of his unparalleled contribution to the Indian heritage.

Psychic spirits like Tyagaraja's are rare indeed and they appear but once in a few centuries. It is thus imperative that Tyagaraja's message is first understood and then spread over the entire country. If there is the will, it is scarcely difficult to achieve this in a short time especially in these days of conquest of space by sophisticated mass communication media.

It is on official record that Tyagaraja gloriously lit a light in the Court of Raja Vijaya Raghunatha Raja of Pudukkottai during his visit there by singing an impromptu Kritis in the rare raga Jyothishwarupini. Such incidents of thrilling drama are many but some of the gripping ones are Tyagaraja-Govinda Marar musical bout, the polite but firm refusal to meet and sing paens of praise on the ruler of Tanjavur, the most sought-after but unrealised meeting of Swathi Tirunal and Tyagaraja, the exchange of views that took place between Gopalakrishana Bharatiar and Tyagaraja, etc. But then these are matters of historical detail, never again possible for humans. Tyagaraja was truly a giant among equals and his life was packed with such epoch-making events.

But more important than his star-studded and many-splendoured life is his divine music, his message and its meaning. Real understanding and universalisation of his unique message of attaining God through sweet music and actually living up to it, each conscious moment of our existence in this workaday world in every nook and corner of Bharat will without doubt usher in "the diamond age of Karnatak Music". As the late lamented Shri S.V.Ramamurthy, I.C.S., said:

"If Tyagaraja were a skilled musician but not a saint, he would not have been remembered as he is. If Tyagaraja were a saint but a poor musician, he would not have been remembered as he is."

Thus, Tyagaraja is remembered today and will be remembered for ever and a day as a towering "Musician-Saint".

While speaking or writing of the Tirumurthis, one cannot but use superlatives because they are above the common mould of language and thought and were literally every inch Supermen.

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JUGALBANDI - THE LATEST IN CREATIVE MUSIC (An Artiste's Experience)

By Lalitha A. Bharadwaj

Music is a unique blend of - M - elody + U - niversality + s - ound + I - nnovation + C - reativity. It is something divine which transports us to the haven of peace.

Innovation and creativity are parts of human life - in Arts, Crafts, Science or any other form of culture. Music is no exception. The expression of one's feelings and thoughts in musical tone combined with rhythm is the very basis of music. This is not confined to one class or one society or one group or one nation. The objective of music is to enchant the listener.

Pleasure of the 'Inquisitive'

We have two *gigantic* age-old systems of Indian Classical Music - the Karnatak and the Hindustani. We have also different multiple instruments - the Shehnai of North and the Nagaswaram of South, the Tabla of North and the Mridangam of South, the Bansuri of North and the Flute of South and the Sitar of the North and the Saraswati Veena of the South.

Though each of the above instruments has its own melody, tone and style of handling, successful attempts have been made by the veteran instrumentalists to present them in harmonious unison on the same platform in the form of *Jugalbandis*. For the human ear, hearing the same instrument gets tiring after some time. Our predecessors did not face this problem because of the devotion of the listeners. Now the listeners' choice is rapidly changing. They want something new on the stage. Hence *Jugalbandis* are slowly gaining popularity.

Take a song composed by one of our great composers of Karnatak music, add a

handful of Raga Sancharas, decorate with Niraval, top it with Swara Prastharas and offer it to the music lovers. Would they not enjoy this tuneful presentation? However, if this is offered in combination along with another equally scintillating music system, definitely the inquisitive human ear will take pleasure in hearing that also. This is a *Jugalbandi* fare. It is an attractive offering of the two musical styles of our country by versatile artistes who have well founded knowledge of their individual music style, but are capable, at the same time, to offer the best of each system in its individual role as well as in unison. Hence a *Jugalbandi* is more of an *integration* programme in which the cosmopolitan audience gets to understand how a particular common Raga is handled in each system.

Medium of Integration

Through a *Jugalbandi*, knowledge is gained both by the audience as well as the artistes. We learn to appreciate and include a liking for both systems of music. It is very difficult to get a totally Hindustani audience to sit through a three - hour Karnatak music programme or Karnatak music rasikas to sit through a Hindustani classical music programme. *Jugalbandi* alone can save this situation.

Listening to a *Jugalbandi* is a pleasant experience. Participating in a *Jugalbandi* is a thrilling experience altogether. Being a devoted Veena artiste, I was longing for an opportunity to play with a Sitarist. Unexpected opportunity knocked at my door when H. M. V. (Gramophone Co. of India) was planning to release my Cassette Album - '*Veenanjali*'. The late Shri Sangeetdas Brijnarainji gave them the Sur-Singar Sam-

sad platform whilst the famous Film Music Director Shri Naushad Ali came forward to release this cassette. Shri Brijnarainji suggested that on this platform I should have a Jugalbandi with a veteran Sitarist of his choice. It happened to be Shri Sanjoy Bandhopadhyay - a Senior Lecturer of Hindustani Music at Khairagarh Music University (Madhya Pradesh)

Challenges

Sitar and Veena are two prime instruments of Hindustani and Karnatak Music respectively. To bring these two instruments together on the same platform, I had to face many challenges. The main hitch was the Sruti. While Sitar is played on a very high pitch, Veena is played on a very low pitch (around 3 Kattai). This was the first hurdle I had to cross. The second hurdle was the speed which is easily played on the Sitar because of its unique to and fro plucking style. However, intense research work and practice at house helped overcome these drawbacks.

At this juncture I must mention that I truly owe it all to my three Gurus. To begin with my late Guru Shri R.B. Krishnamurthy Naidu who taught me to handle the Veena in various styles. Clarity and speed was taught to me by my second Guru Shri Chitti Babu. In addition, my intensive coaching under my present Guru Smt T.R. Balamani gave me all the confidence to experiment and explore.

With this background I accepted to play the Jugalbandi extempore. I was slightly apprehensive of the outcome of this programme since both Shri Bandhopadhyay and myself had no prior knowledge of each other's ability and views on our differing systems. However it turned out to be a very thrilling experience for us as it was well appreciated by the cosmopolitan

audience. "Excellent Rapport" was what the "Times of India" commented.

My second experience in Jugalbandhi was another challenge. I was taken in for a real surprise when the renowned Sitar virtuoso Pandit Kartik Kumarji invited me to perform with him. I was given only two days notice. Being a veteran Sitarist, Panditji suggested that we could play extempore on the stage. Once again I had to play without any prior rehearsals. The programme was a great success. My happiness knew no bounds when Pandit Kartik Kumarji appreciated the way I played our Karnatak Kharaharapriya similar to their Kafi Raga. This programme was once again applauded in "Times of India" as a "Purposeful Attempt" in creative music of the year 1994.

Caution & Care

From my above experiences in Jugalbandi, I have realised that it is a 'tight-rope' walk but exciting at the same time. One has to maintain balance and equilibrium constantly. When we play the similar Ragas, we do tend to divulge into each other's style. Hence an artiste's individual capacity has to be very high to reach success in this venture. While we can bring about a harmonious blend of the two styles we cannot make any compromise on the purity of our music.

Enlightenment

Both these Jugalbandis have given me an insight into how the soft melody of the Veena can be blended with the strong vibrations of the Sitar strings. The readers will appreciate that the tuneful sounds of the Sitar come from the string vibrations whilst the melody of the Veena emanates from the hollow part in the KUDAM or UDHARAM as it is called.

Secondly, the main string in the Sitar is not obstructed by the presence of the strings beyond it. Hence Gamakas can be given easily at that high pitch. On the Veena, the main strings's (Sarani) free movement is hampered by the presence of the Panchama, Mandra and Anumandra strings beyond it. Hence it is difficult to play Gamakas on a very high pitch as the main string (Sarani) becomes hard and tight.

Thirdly, the speed on the Veena is impeded by the plucking style and posture in which the Veena is held.

Let me be clear that a Jugalbandi is *not a competition* between two artistes of different schools. It should not create a complex either within the artiste or within the audience. The artistes should only try to explore the similarities and differences

in the two different schools of music. Of course, this means a lot of understanding between the two artistes and much depends upon their individual excellence, especially when the performance is extempore.

The audience too bear the responsibility of encouraging both the artistes and not adopt a partisan attitude. One has to cut across the barriers and merge in music, bringing out a harmonious blending, by leading in a complementary manner without creating any competitive or jarring friction. In short, at the end of the performance, all we have in our mind should be an understanding of the *creative music* and a *pleasant feeling* of the performance in our hearts.

Obituary

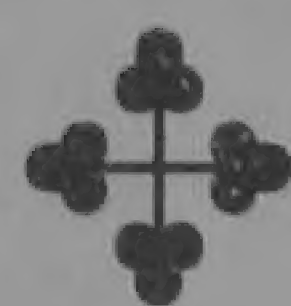
"SANGEETDAS"

Sangeetdas Brijnarain, the founder and driving force of Sur Singar Samsad is no more. He was a true dasa of Sangeet, serving its cause, its promotion, innovating in presentation. 'Yugal Sangeet', pairing odd instruments, systems of both music and dance was his pastime. Many an art bud bloomed in his "Kal-ke-Kalakar", and many rose to eminence from his 'Surmani', 'Talmani' and 'Singarmani'.

The 'Mela' he conducted of Haridas Sangeet Sammelan brought together artistes young and old from different streams and styles to present and experiment on an integrated form.

We record with deep regret the sad demise of this Sangeetdas. We pray that his mission continues.

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GHARANAS IN HINDUSTANI MUSIC

By Sakuntala Narasimhan

Among all countries, ours is the only one having the unique distinction of nurturing two different systems of classical music, both with full claims to being Indian in form and content. The areas of the Southern States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala have fostered what is known as the Karnatak system of music while the rest of the country in the east, west and north have developed the Hindustani system. (The border line areas have both co-existing, rather than a mixture of the two styles).

That the two trace their evolutions back to the same pre-historic Vedic times is widely known and conceded; also that the ancient texts dating back to the 13th century and earlier are studied as relevant to the evolution of our music through the early centuries in both North and South Indian music. That the division into two distinct streams, each with a grammar of its own, took place some seven hundred years ago is also granted by musicologists. While the distinguishing characteristics of each make for their recognition as two clearly bifurcated streams, the common bases of melody (Raga), rhythm (Tala) and aesthetics are similar and make for a unique flavour typifying Indian music that sets it apart from all other systems of music, whether of the East or West.

From the historians' point of view, the period following the bifurcation saw certain landmark stages in the evolution of what is known as Hindustani music - there were the medieval years during Akbar's and Tansen's time, when the Dhrupad form was dominant; a vocal form with Sanskrit lyrics set to fixed rhythm patterns, it demanded a considerable measure of virtuosity and versatility from the performer - a good, well trained voice with a range of 2-3 octaves,

breath control of a higher order to do justice to the phrasings in slow, medium and fast tempo, a good grasp of rhythm and control over Laya and Tala. There was a rigid format that specified the stages of development through Alap in slow and fast movements and then the composition and its development through double and triple speeds.

Fewer Constraints

Naturally, in the Hedonistic ambience of the courtly routines ushered in by the Moghul regimes, the Dhrupad began to yield place to a less rigid form of composition with fewer rules and constraints - the Khayal. While retaining the melodic content and grammar, the Khayal, with fewer words and a more elastic framework on which to peg them, became more acceptable as well as appreciated; and, today, in the 20th century, it may be said to be in its heyday. Composers like Sadarang and Adarang left a legacy of thousands of Khayal 'Bandish' (composition) that still form the bulwark of present-day repertoires.

As sung today, it is a predominantly improvised item, spun out, stage by stage, first in slow speed and gradually in faster speeds, using two or four line lyrics over and over again to develop the different aspects of beauty of the Raga.

Side by side with the evolution of the Khayal form, and a gradual slipping into near obscurity of the Dhrupad composition, the light classical songs known as the Thumri took shape with the accent on the emotional content of the lyrics, almost invariably that of Shringara (love), highlighting some aspect of the Nayika-Nayaka theme of eroticism.

To a lesser extent in terms of popularity,

there also evolved the Tarana, Dadra and Tappa compositions, each with a characteristic of its own. The Bhakti-cult of the post-medieval year also saw the emergence of saint-poets like Tulsidas, Kabir, Mira and Narsi Mehta and scores of others whose devotional verses got incorporated into the body of music as Bhajans and Kirtans.

"Gharanas"

In the process of evolution, as the Khayal form crystallised into a specific, identifiable form, there naturally developed different schools of Khayal-singing. When a stalwart evolved his own style of treatment emphasising certain features and under - playing certain others, depending on his strong and weak points (those with good voices, for example, highlighted the melody aspect, while those with a penchant for complicated rhythm gave importance to the Laya aspect, relegating melody to second place; or those with a restricted vocal range, specialised in a style that explored in elaborate depth, the possibilities of a limited use of just a few notes.

In the 'Gurukula' tradition, when disciples learnt under their teachers for several years at a stretch, these special, individual styles were picked up by succeeding generations and passed on to their disciples in turn. Each particular style thus became identified as a 'gharana' or school of singing, named after either the originator or the place.

Laya-borne or Melody-oriented

Thus, we have the Agra Gharana of which the most famous exponent was the late Faiyaz Khan (1886-1950). This style is known for its emphasis on Laya and strict adherence to Tala, with melody taking a subordinate place. It is forceful 'male' singing, robust in delivery, rather than delicate. At the other extreme is the Kirana

Gharana (named after a place called Kirana) represented by the late Abdul Karim Khan (1872-1937). This school holds tune-fulness as paramount, with rhythm taking a second place. Good sweet voices are a characteristic of this school and the artistes exploit their asset to the full, letting the melodic content of their voice ride high without being distracted by the regimen of rhythm. Hirabai Barodekar and Bhimsen Joshi belong to this Gharana. Their music will never contain jugglery with 'Laya'.

Fusion of Laya & Melody

In between these two extreme Gharanas (one emphasising rhythm and the other melody), there are several other schools of singing with varying degrees of emphasis on the two aspects - the Jaipur and Gwalior Gharanas lie midway between Agra and Kirana, with equal importance to both Tala and Swara. While the Jaipur style is called a 'complex' fusion of the two aspects, the Gwalior style attempts a simple synthesis. The Gwalior Gharana is widely believed to be the 'original Gharana' from which others were derived as off-shoots. Mallikarjun Mansur was a representative of the Jaipur Gharana which incidentally, is also called the Atrauli Gharana (after the place) or Alladia Gharana (after the late Alladia Khan 1855-1946). This Gharana does not believe in extra-slow tempo, but begins in medium speed. The late Kesarbai Kerkar and Mogubai Kurdikar (b.1904) also belong to this Gharana. Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872 - 1931), represented the Gwalior Gharana, of which the late Omkarnath Thakur, (1876-1967) was also a leading light.

Lilting 'Patiala'

What is known as the Punjabi or Patiala Gharana was popularised by the late Bade Gulam Ali Khan who combined the virility of the Agra school with the lilting beauties that his extraordinary voice made

possible. His son, Munawar Ali Khan, carried the style forward.

What the late Amir Khan (1909-1974) popularised, was a kind of extra-slow Vilambit treatment of the Khayal form, which stretched to such lengths that the rhythm factor seemed at times almost non-existent, except for the arrival of the 'Sam' ((the beginning point of the Tala cycle at which the lyrics of the Khayal and the rhythm beat are to be synchronised after each round of improvisation). At the same time, he indulged in extremely fast, cascading Taan patterns that flew from one octave to the other with effortless ease, thanks to a voice rich in range and timbre. His style came to be known as the Indore Gharana (after the city he came from). In his heyday, his style was so popular that many aspiring musicians of the younger set held him as their ideal and copied his style of singing, right down to the slight grating rasp in the voice.

Rampur Speciality

Then, there is also the Rampur Gharana fashioned by the galaxy of musicians who were at the Rampur court during the last 100 years. Thanks to the keen interest of the Nawabs of this princely family, several generations of musicians who found patronage here, evolved their own special ways of treatment of the Khayal. The late Mushtaq Hussain Khan (1880-1964) belonged to this school; so did the doyen of the Gharana, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan, and his son-in-law and musical heir, Ustad Hafeez Ahmed Khan. The Rampur style specialises in unexpected 'leaps and jumps' in Taans, a unique style of 'Behlawar' (spinning out their Khayal in an in-between tempo that is neither Taan nor Alap), the use of Tappa Ang (involved, circular phrasings resembling those used in Tappa compositions), and the use of Meends (glissando notes). Another speciality of the Gharana is the treatment

of the Tarana composition. While other Gharanas now perform Taranas as if these were just Drut (fast) Khayals without lyrics, the Rampur style is to spin out improvisations with the use of the solfa and Jati phrases, which need considerable skill in pronunciation and control over rhythm.

When the late Amanalli Khan (1884-1953) moved to the Bhendi Bazar area in Bombay and subsequently taught a number of disciples to keep his style alive, this particular style came to be known as Bhendi Bazar Gharana. One speciality of this Gharana is the judicious use of silences, particularly in arriving at the Sam. Without crowding in too much of technicalities into every phrase, this style exploits the beauties of silent gaps to add to the overall aesthetics. The accent is also on beauties of Bandish (composition) as much as on the improvisation, unlike in some Gharanas where the composition is merely used as a peg to weave their imagination around.

Differences

Some Gharanas flourished through teaching - by preparing a number of students who in turn propagated the style and popularised it. The Agra Gharana is an example. Other Gharanas concentrated on nurturing stalwarts and promoting them as concert performers so that the teaching aspect got pushed to the side lines. Exponents of the Rampur Gharana were so jealously nurtured by the Nawabs and promoted as performing artistes that they were not often allowed to travel out of the State. The time at their disposal for training students was also limited because of the accent on their performing abilities. Hence, the Gharana ended up having fewer pupils and exponents.

Popularity of Gharanas thus depended on several factors, not all of them musical. What was difficult and needed rigorous training, naturally became less popular with

aspiring artistes and whatever came easily and made fewer demands, gained a horde of converts. Thus, it is that the Kirana Gharana which makes minimal demands on rhythmic virtuosity has become most popular.

Differences between Gharanas extend not only to the methods of singing, but also to definitions of Ragas in some cases. Apart from the common Ragas in use, there are some complex ones that do not have explicit definitions; different Gharanas interpret these in different ways, for example, the melody 'Lalita Gowri' is interpreted in a particular way by the Alladia Gharana. Exponents of other Gharanas will either not perform this Raga or give it a different form according to their own lexicon.

Some Gharanas do not sing Thumris and Dadra (the Indore Gharana, for instance, Amir Khan never sang Thumris) whereas others (like the Patiala Gharana) not only include Thumris but specialise in it (as Bade Gulam Ali Khan did). All these characteristics added up to a 'school' of singing (or playing, for, Gharanas apply even to instrumentalists, based on the originator of a particular style or technique).

Beauty In Each Gharana

Each style, it goes without saying, has its own beauties - if one reminds us of a silken thread, another portrays a gigantic, rugged fortress and a third seems like a tonal portrait of sculpted figures; one resembles a lilting stream, another a brook flowing down a slope and yet another a deep, awe-inspiring river in flood. Each Gharana has an artistic discipline of its own with varying degrees of emphasis on Laya and Swara. Each also seems to be characterised by different styles of voice production (this, because of the timbre of the originator of the Gharana). A slight nasal tinge is said to be a characteristic of the Kirana Gharana whereas the Agra style has a full-throated, open voice.

Ideally, however, the choice of a Gharana for a disciple ought to be on the basis of the quality and capabilities of the voice - one with a deep, base voice, should go in for training in a style that makes optimal use of these qualities while one with a penchant for fast, glamorous pharsings should specialise in a style that uses such flighted passages.

'Cause' for Decline

In practice, however, this does not happen - choice of Gharanas for training is often, inevitably, governed by the availability of a good teacher in the area (never mind whether his style would suit the kind of voice that the student has) or the personal inclinations either of the student or of the parent. This is one of the reasons why the special feature of each Gharana have become devalued to mere mannerism in contemporary usage which in turn is a part of the general decline in popularity and patronage for classical music.

Enrichment

Speaking of different 'Gharanas' made sense in a milieu where insularity kept them apart. With improved communications today and unlimited chances for students of one Gharana to listen to, record and assimilate different styles through the radio, records and other media, it is believed that definitions of Gharanas are no longer as valid as they used to be. Exposed to elements from different styles (and also because students no longer have the kind of long Gurukula apprenticeship that characterised the old, traditional method of training, it is unavoidable that students of one Gharana pick up features from another, to blur the edges between the different styles. A certain amount of overlap and give - and take seem inevitable. In so far as this means, the enrichment of each style through the assimilation of the good points in other Gharanas, it is good, but purists

disagree, saying that the purity of the Gharanas is being violated. Teachers of one Gharana do not approve of their students imbibing and incorporating features of Gharanas other than their own into music, calling this heresy.

In a historic perspective, the point is well-made about the need for purity and preservation of different schools of art, and yet not to take advantage of the facilities put within our reach by technology smacks of bigotry. If an artiste groomed in the Agra Gharana also happens to have a pliable voice that could explore the specialities of the Kirana Gharana, his (or her) music would certainly be enriched by such eclecticism.

Interaction & Intermingling

Also, disciples no longer spend extended years of training under one single guru - those learning at music colleges, for example, receive training simultaneously from a number of teachers trained in different Gharanas. Just as, in other areas, of life too, tradition has had to make way for and accommodate neoteric developments (a farmer's son no longer goes automatically into farming), so also in music, the vexed question of Gharanas that is often debated by traditionists ought to be seen in the right perspective. Whereas, a generation ago, it was customary to ask, 'What Gharana do you belong to?', today it is only as valid as a question saying, 'What family profession do you belong to?'

What ultimately matters is that one's style of singing - Gharana or School-ought to be dictated in the final analysis by the musical assets one has (the sense of rhythm, voice range, timbre and musical

temperament) which means in turn that such an assessment should precede the choice of a teacher so that the style in which one is about to receive training will make optimal use of one's capabilities. Even the son or daughter of a leading musician, according to this logic, will not automatically receive training from the parent, but look for the teacher and the style that will best suit his or her musical assets. Perhaps, this is not being done - constraints of modern life-styles preclude any effort on the part of aspirants towards going in search of the right teacher. Few teachers in their turn will turn away a student on the grounds that his (or her) voice will not suit the particular Gharana.

Ideally, therefore, the conflict about Gharanas and purity of style should not exist - or, if it has been thrown up by the exigencies of modern life-styles, the dictates of logic - and the imperatives of musical excellence for maximum aesthetics - point to the futility of insularity and advocate promoting interaction and intermingling wherever this will mean an ultimate enriching of the musical stock.

As long as there are no two opinions about delicacy, tonal beauty and nuances as well as rhythmic discipline and artistry, all being essential ingredients of good music, combining these elements in varying degrees depend upon one's ingenuity, imagination and versatility, can only lead to a promotion of aesthetics - and that is all good music is (or should be) about.

Courtesy. "Vivekananda Kendra Patrika" (August, 1984)

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A Report

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TALAS IN HINDUSTANI AND KARNATAK SYSTEMS

The recent lecture - demonstration by the Mridangam cum - Vocal maestro Sri T.V. Gopalakrishnan on Tala perspective in Karnatak and Hindustani music was full of information clearing many a doubt prevailing among Rasikas who get to hear the Jugalbandhis nowadays. At the outset it should be noted that it was Tala perspective in the above two Paddatis and NOT Tala in one versus the other, that formed the subject of the study. That required one to be with different frame of mind and with an open mind!

Before launching on the exact comparative study TVG spoke of the importance of Laya and the four basic tenets of classical music:

1. Swara (Sound)
2. Laya (rhythm)
3. Pada (words to carry music)
4. Avadhana (Individual creativity or contribution of the musician)

As the adage "Sruti Matha, Layah Pitha" goes, Laya is next only to Sruti and also as important as Sruti. The word meaning Base or foundation had its origin in Sanskrit. It is indeed the Base on which the edifice of composition stands. "Without rhythm music loses its form". There is a conviction that Tala implies the union of Shiva and Shakti. 'Ta' representing Tandava and 'La' for Lasya.

Tracing the common origin the maestro said, that Indian Music developed as one system till the 13th and 14th centuries. With the advent of Dhruvapada or Dhruvad it got bifurcated as Karnatak and Hindustani music. Hence much of the terminology and parameters are common

to both the systems even today. Just like minimum of four notes are required to constitute a Raga, a minimum of two Angas (Tala component) and three Akshara kala or time components are required to constitute a Tala.

The Solfa system (Bol) or Solkattu (mnemonics) is the unique contribution of Indian Music to the world of rhythm, he pointed out. The visual counting and time keeping -- a way to reckon the Tala in Karnatak Music is highly sophisticated being governed by Tala Dasa Pranas. From what one learnt from the lec-dem, keeping Time was common even in the times of Dhruvads with singer emphasising the Sam (Samam), and showing the Kali as well. But with the advent of Khayal and fading away of Dhruvapada, the Time keeping was gradually left to the responsibility of the percussionists. So Solfa system became important to identify particular Tala in the form of the 'Tekka' as it is called now. Sam is indicated by stronger than usual stroke on the percussion as 'Dha' using both the hands. Both singer (instrumentalist also) and the percussionist are required to assure at the point of Sam simultaneously. That makes the Hindustani musicians more dependent on the percussionist for the indication of Sam.

This is not the case with Karnatak music as the musician and the percussionist each has independent means of Tala reference. In Hindustani Tala is reckoned as 'Tekka' or Tapiya with emphatic Sam and empty Kali. These are pointers for the musicians to arrive at the Sam. (The ornamental rhythm in Hindustani is called 'Paran'). This fact of visual and mental reckoning of Tala in Karnatak and Hindus-

tani music were brought to fore by his fine demonstration.

TVG clearly enunciated the major difference between the Karnatak and Hindustani music in this aspect. In Karnatak the importance is much more to the "Eduppu" of the song or Pallavi than to the Sam. Only in cases where the song or Pallavi starts on Samam, the Sam gets important. And also only at the end of composition, the percussionist along with other Upa Pakka Vadyas like Kanjira, Ghatam etc., plays the filling with longer Mukhtayi to end in Samam.

The maestro brought to notice another predominant difference between the two Paddathis. In Karnatak music each Avarta is divided into equal parts called Matras or Aksharas, whereas in Hindustani some Matras are emphatic while others have 'empty' beat ... Kali.

The solfa system 'Bol' denotes the Matras in Hindustani whereas it is 'solkattu' (Mnemonics) in Karnatak style. The Bol patterns for each Tala in Hindustani is fixed so as to exhibit the Sam and Kali on the percussion while in Karnatak it is not the same. One can have innumerable Bol patterns for each Tala as its Angas are clearly defined and Laya variations are logically and scientifically played, provided, one's creativity fits in the Laya intricacies in the total Aksharakala. This is the freedom/ambience enjoyed by the Karnatak percussionists. For Mridangist 'Solkattus' are like swaras. He is not a time-keeper to play 'Solkattus'. He spins around them weaving the Laya patterns into the Tala Angas. The demonstration by Raja Rao highlighted this..

Further, Hindustani classical compositions, especially Khayals, TVG said, may start on any Matra other than Sam. The Bandish is the first cadence (like the first line of Pallavi) of the composition. As the Bandish starts at any Matra, and since the

Sam is very important, from the beginning of Bandish till arriving at Sam, there is improvisational freedom.

In Karnatak music, there is no provision to tamper with the tempo or Kala Pramana. Once it starts it has to be the same till the end. In Hindustani the same were held true when Dhrupad was reigning supreme. With doubling (Duigan), trebling (Thiguan) were practised and also 1 1/4 and 1 1/2 speeds.. (equal to Khanda and Tisra gati in Karnatak.). With advent of Khayal music greater freedom ensued. Musicians sing in 2 or 3 changed tempos in Vilambit and Madhya Laya or Drut Khayal, increasing the speed step by step to reach climactic proportions..

As for the number of Talas, there are about 30 in all in Hindustani system though in actual use say about 15 or 20 are in vogue, the maestro said. Whereas the Karnatak has a variety of them, the Margi-Desi ones, the 108, the Navasandhi, Tirupugazh Talas and the most popular, in vogue, Suladi Sapta Talas which with their Laghu Jatis and Gati formulas have given rise to 35 and 175 Talas respectively. That the Karnatak system with its logic and scientific approach has scaled greater heights in the evolution of Tala goes without saying.

Another interesting and educative part of the lec-dem was the demonstration on Mridangam and Tabla that helped one understand the play of Talas common to both systems. Such as Adi - Teental, Eka - Keherwa. Roopakam (or Tisra Ekam) - Dadra and Chapu - Rupak Taal etc.

The 'percussion solo' formed another interesting facet of this educative session. Since the Khayal style in Hindustani allows lot of improvisational freedom to percussionists, there does not arise particular necessity for a time slot for Tabla solo, the speaker said. Whereas in Karnatak music the Thani has a prestigious place

approximately 20 Avartas or more in a Kriti. The Pallavi of a Kriti starting in Madhya Sthayi, Anupallavi in Tara Sthayi and Charanam again in Madhya Sthayi finally coming back to Mandra Stayi complete this cycle of Avartas. Thus a Mridangist follows the musician in all these Sthayis while accompanying and naturally the situation arises on the concert platform to give the percussionist a chance for solo called 'Thani Avartanam' to show his prowess.

In the realm of percussion solo and ensemble play the Karnatak Tala system remains unparalleled, because the Thani Avartanam or the ensemble Tala Vadhya Katcheri has been developed to a high degree of logical and aesthetic progression with great attention to details. Like any music composition, it has an introductory passage with rhythmic permutations and reductions into 1/2 Avarta, 1/4 Avarta and 1/8 Avarta or total of 2 Avartas taken and divided into 5 or 6 or 7 Solkattu devised to arrive at Eduppu. The ultimate finale is with the passage with frills called 'Paran' ending with 'Mohara' or 'Korvai' of one, two or more Avartas repeating thrice to arrive at Eduppu or Samam as the case may be.

The same system is more or less followed by Tabla players but without Kuraippu or reduction. Mohara or Korvai are not prevalent. But many varieties of Savaries (Nadais) and Chakradhar Tehais (thrice repeating percussive combination) constitute a great part in Hindustani percussion. There is also the habit of saying the Bol first and playing it on the instrument. But in Karnatic Music the Mridangist seldom utters a word. His instrument speaks the Sollus. But there are artistes specialised in uttering or reciting the 'Sollus' with impeccable ease and these are called 'Konnakkol' Vidwans.

Generally, in actual performance both Karnatak and Hindustani percussionists are not very different in the sense that both of them have to remember where the Tala is with reference to Music, keep up the tempo and coordinate with the main artist and try not to be monotonous and repetitive. Like all religions lead to the same goal, all Talas merge in the ocean of Laya which is the integral part of the unfathomable Music!

Janaki Swamy

'Feel' of the Rhythm

What does the musician do when singing to Tala? We speak of measuring time, beating time. But this is a gross view, an external, peripheral approach. The use of such words has contributed not a little to the coarsening of Karnatak music.

The musician feels the rhythm of the song as well as improvisations. His mind swings to the rhythm and its cyclic configuration, the particular Tala. He pulsates with it. Counting and beating are not imperatives. If at all, they have to be gentle, not aggressive. When a second person joins with a Mridangam, he accompanies the musician. He is expected to provide the rhythmic "background" for the unfolding "picture" of the melody. For doing this he must be sensible enough to grasp the rhythmic flow of the melody. This sense cannot be got by arithmetical calculations, which are the easiest things to do. Calculations, conscious and long-winding, belong to the rational part of the mind. They have sort of dehydrating effect. By overdoing these both singer and percussionist tend to become strangers to the feeling for the rhythm of the song. There is no play of imagination either. In the absence of these two the effort, however spectacular, is not art.

- V.V. Sadagopan
in " Indian Music Journal."

"Moha Mudgara"

Shakti School of Bharata Natyam in Los Angeles founded by Viji Prakash, an alumni of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir, Bombay, seems to have entrenched this ancient classical art form, especially of the Tanjore style in foreign shores. The 'Migration' of the style from its home soil, Tanjore, to Bombay and now on to Los Angeles has not however cast any cloudings of modernism on the tradition. On the other hand, there is a thrust to preserve and propagate the heritage with greater involvement and commitment. Not with fanatic fervour though but with essential attunement to changing times.

One who had watched Viji grow up as a performing artiste had reasons to believe that she might scale the heights and stay there predominantly as a performing artiste. That she would pay equal attention to teaching, choreographing and conducting programmes came as a pleasant surprise when she herself conducted her daughter Mythili's Arangetram, four years ago. The felicity with which she played the cymbals spoke of the "Sadhaka" she had done on all fronts. Her choreographic skill in solo made a mark. Now she has extended it to ballet. Dance drama is the in-thing today. The colour, the variety, the synchrony and also the overall harmony makes an impress, all its own, and a story or theme is better visualised in a dance-drama format than in solo depiction. Viji's recent presentation of "Moha Mudgara" conceptualised with the message of Adi Sankara enshrined in his *Bhaja Govindam* elevated her to an all rounder (artiste teacher - Choreographer - Conductor) in her own right.

Woven into the fabric of dance was the message about Maya that shrouds one's life and the necessity to get away from its maze and seek the truth through Bhakti, "Harinama". And the theme was driven home through depictions, phased through human foibles and frailties, temptations and avarice that dog one's life in childhood, youth, middle age and old age and the ultimate dawn of truth preached by Sankara.

A bold venture it was that Viji had taken and fulfilled with certain elan in compering and conducting with a sprinkling of Vachikabhinaya. The teenaged dancers about 8 in number were well groomed and showed an excellent sense of rhythm, technique and synchrony. They danced with confidence and abandon. And one could not make out unless specified that these were NRI children born and bred in the American soil, of different cultural clime. They finely attuned themselves to our art tradition, thanks to Viji's efforts, dedication and discipline.

The theme though lofty was conveyed through popular episodes. The theme song was *Bhaja Govindam*, but save for the refrain the essence of the other verses was reflected through compositions more popular in vogue and with abhinaya potential, and much easier to reach the people.

For the ephemeral materialistic life she could not have chosen a better episode than Purandaradasa's early life as Srinivasa, the miser with a Midas' touch. His *Harismarane mado Niranthara* was evidence enough of his retrieval from the illusion and power.

The frolicsome, carefree childhood had Bharatiyar's *Teerada Vilayattupillai*

portrayed while the romantic youth was depicted in Arunacha Kavi's *Yaro Ivar Yaro*. Viji could have confined to Rama Sitas's mutual admiration. Giving it a modern twist and letting them hold their hands without even a suggestion of a wedding or the trial preceding it was, a bit too much of an artistic liberty taken on the theme.

Pride over wealth and power, the episodes of old age, the victory of Shiva in *Adum Deivam Nee Arulvay* over the blood thirsty Kali who had tasted power and did not want to relent were imaginative reflections conveying the message.

The Sathsangam, the Gurucharanam were neatly woven into the choreography. It was quite an experience to the young girls dancing the theme with finely woven Nritta passages and a visual treat to the audience as well.

The wings were quite powerful and contributed significantly to the success of

the dance drama. Viji's Nattuvangam combined the grandeur of Guru Mahalingam Pillai's cymbal play and the intricacies of Guru Kalyanasundaram's rhythmic stance. Her soft and vibrant cymbal play neatly synchronised with the dancer. Rather it was a guide to the dancers. She had quite a versatile team of musicians. Babu Parameswaran, the tunesmith -cum vocalist was a great support. His resonant voice did carry the Bhava in all its shades, and with the feel of the song he reflected in melody what the dancers tried to portray in visual.

The team comprised V. Vedakrishnan (Mridangam), Kalaiarasan (Violin) and N. Srinivasan (Flute), all musicians of merit, settled in Los Angeles and working for Shakti School of Bharata Natyam, which conducts classes in music too.

Kinnari

"A Surprise from Shanmukhananda"

The Bombay Shanmukhananda Sabha's prestigious Sangeetha Vidyalaya headed by stalwarts like Prof. K. S. Narayanaswami, T.S. Krishnaswami (Products of that cradle of great music viz. the Music Department of Annamalai University), has thrown up promising musicians from time to time (violinists B. Ranjani and Gayathri to name a few), who subsequently have made a name in Madras. The latest to arrive is a 12 year old slip of a boy,

Vijay Natesan, who played the Mridangam for Prof. T. N. Krishnan's duo recital at TVG's Academy of Music and Arts Festival at Gnananda Hall on Monday, with admirable sangfroid and smartness.

His knack for 'accompanying' surfaced early even in the 'Viriboni' Varnam. The little fingers coaxed much 'Nadham' from the hard instrument, while Kalapramana skills came to the fore in the Swaras for 'Vathapi' as well as 'Enduku Peddala'.

TNK can well take out a patent for his antaragandhara in Sankarabaranam - so sweet, so rich in overtone, submerging the rasika in enjoyment.

Rajagopal, just 15 years, played the Ghatam with a fine competence in fingering and laya. The two played an efficient Thani in Adi Tala. Well done Shanmukhananda!

K.S. Mahadevan

Courtesy "Indian Express" Madras.

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 022

(C) Phones : 407 88 88, 409 22 11, 409 22 44.

7.1.1995 - Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Tirumala-Tirupathi Devasthanam
Asthana Vidwan and Isai Peraringyar
Shri A.K.C. Natarajan & Party

Clarinet Recital

8.1.1995 - Sunday - 6.00 p.m.

Shri Maharajapuram S. Srinivasan
(Sri Maharajapuram V. Senthil Kumar)

Vocal Recital

Shri M.A. Sundaresan

Violin

Shri Umayalpuram Mali

Mridangam

Shri Pudukottai N. Ramachandran

Chhatam

SPRING FESTIVAL

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18.3.1995 Smt. Sudha Raghunathan - Vocal Recital
Saturday Ms. M. Narmada - Violin
6.00 p.m. Shri Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan - Mridangam
Shri Karthick - Chhatam.

(This performance is dedicated to the memory of Sangeetha Kalamidhi Smt. M.L. Vasanthakumari)

19.3.1995 Hyderabad Brothers - Vocal Recital
Sunday (Shri D. Seshachari & Shri D. Raghavachari)
6.00 p.m. Shri Peri Sreeramamurthy - Violin
Shri Guruvayur Dorai - Mridangam
Shri N. Govindarajan - Chhatam

Venue:

Indian Gymkhana Grounds, Matunga, Bombay-400019

NATIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

FEBRUARY 1995 - Carnatic & Hindustani Music Recitals

11.2.1995 - Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Smt. Padmaja Srinivasan (New Delhi) - Carnatic Vocal Recital
(Initially trained by the legendary Shri Musiri
Subramanyam Iyer she later studied under
Shri T.K. Govinda Rao)

Sri C. Laxminarayanan

Violin

Sri Thanjavur Subramaniam

Mridangam

Sri Pudukottai Ramachandran

Chhatam

12.2.1995 - Sunday - 6.00 p.m.

Smt. Shruti Sadolikar Katkar & Party - Hindustani Vocal Recital
Venue

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2.3.1995 - THURSDAY - 6.00 P.M.

Mandolin Maestro

Shri U. Srinivas

Mandolin

Shri Delhi P. Sundararajan

Violin

Sangeetha Kalamidhi

Shri Thanjavur T.K. Murthy

Mridangam

Shri E.M. Subramaniam

Chhatam

3.3.1995 - FRIDAY - 6.00 P.M.

Saxophone Maestro

Shri Kadri Copal Nath

Saxophone

Ms. Kanyakumari

Violin

Shri Guruvayur Dorai

Mridangam

Shri Bangalore K. Venkatram

Chhatam

Shri Rajasekhar

Morsing

4.3.1995 - SATURDAY - 6.00 P.M.

The Renowned Gayaki

Smt. Sudha Raghunathan

Vocal

Smt. Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi

Violin

Shri Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan

Mridangam

Shri S. Karthick

Chhatam

Dr. V. Subramanian

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SAVANTS DAY CELEBRATIONS

Venue: 1st FLOOR FOYER, SABHA PREMISES

148TH ARADHANA OF SAINT TYAGARAJA

21.1.1995 Saturday 8.30 A.M.

Rendering of Pancharatna Kritis by Teachers, Students of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya and Vidwans & Vidushis of Bombay

21.1.1995 - Evening Session - Sangeetha Samarpanam

6.00 - 6.30 p.m.	Smt. Salpriya & Kum. Vidya Shri Sriram Suryanarayan	- Veena Duet - Mridangam
6.30 - 7.00 p.m.	Smt. Mangalam Krishnamoorthy Kum. N. Lakshmi Priya Master Vijay Natesan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
7.00 - 7.30 p.m.	Smt. Sankari Santhanam Kum. N. Lakshmi Priya Shri K. Kumar	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
7.30 - 8.00 p.m.	Shri B. Ravishankar Kum. N. Lakshmi Priya Shri Sriram Suryanarayan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Tiruvayyaru Kshetra Kritis (Special Programme devised by Smt. Kalyani Sharma) Rendered by Smt. Prema Krishnan, Smt. Janaki Swamy, Smt. Renuka Rajan & Smt. Ganga Rajan Smt. Prema Sundaresan Shri K. Kumar	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam

SUNDAY-22.1.1995

6.00 - 6.30 p.m.	Master Curumani Krishnan Shri P.N. Suresh Shri L. Shankar	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
6.30 - 7.00 p.m.	Shri P.N. Suresh Master Vivek Rajagopal	- Violin Solo - Mridangam
7.00 - 7.30 p.m.	Smt. Indira Rajaraman Shri R. Rajagopalan Shri L. Shankar	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
7.30 - 8.00 p.m.	Kum. S. Gowri Shri R. Rajagopalan N. Ramaswami	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.00 - 8.30 p.m.	Shri G.S. Mani Shri P.N. Suresh Shri N. Ramaswami	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.30 - 9.00 p.m.	Anjaneya Utsavam conducted by Shri P.S. Krishnamoorthy Master Vivek Rajagopal	- Vocal - Mridangam

MANGALAM

SRI PURANDARADASA DAY

SATURDAY-18.2.1995-SANGEETHANJALI

6.00 - 6.30 p.m.	Kum. Vidya Balasubramaniam Kum. Meera Mahadevan Master Vijay Natesan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
6.30 - 7.00 p.m.	Kum. Sridevi Amudan Master K. Harikrishnan	- Violin Solo - Mridangam
7.00 - 7.30 p.m.	Smt. Tara Vijayaraghavan Kum. Meera Mahadevan Master Vijay Natesan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
7.30 - 8.00 p.m.	Smt. Gayathri Sundaresan Kum. Meera Mahadevan Sriram Suryanarayan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.00 - 8.30 p.m.	Kum. Niranjani & Kum. Shobha Shri K. Harikrishnan	- Veena Duet - Mridangam
8.30 - 9.00 p.m.	Kum. Indira Chavali Kum. Meera Mahadevan Shri K. Harikrishnan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam

SRI SYAMA SASTRI DAY

SUNDAY-19.2.1995-SANGEETHARPANAM

6.00-6.30 p.m.	Smt. Rama Ganapathi Shri P.N. Suresh Shri Prasanna Shyamaprasad	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
6.30-7.00 p.m.	Kum. R. Maithrayee Kum. Meera Mahadevan Shri Prasanna Shyamaprasad	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
7.00-7.30 p.m.	Master R. Sudarshan Master Subramanian Narayanan	- Veena Solo - Mridangam
7.30-8.00 p.m.	Smt. Akhila Janardhanan Shri P.N. Suresh Shri Prasanna Shyamaprasad	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.00-8.30 p.m.	Smt. Meena Krishnan Kum. Meera Mahadevan Master Vijay Natesan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam
8.30-9.00 p.m.	Shri V. Vamanan Shri P.N. Suresh Master Vijay Natesan	- Vocal - Violin - Mridangam

A SPECIAL PONGAL BONANZA

"GUITAR" in Carnatic Recital by

Shri R. Prasanna (U.S.A.) & Party

(First Time in Bombay)

on Sunday - 15th January 1995 - 6.00 p.m.

at the Sabha's First Floor Foyer.

S. Seshadri
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Hon. Secretaries

Cultural Scene in Bombay

Bidding adieu to the rains the Pandal Cutcheris at the Indian Gymkhana grounds were resumed by the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha on November 26, 1994 presenting an ensemble instrument in an exacting classical system. Saxophone, a loud-toned wind instrument is not so easy to wield in Karnatak idiom and the proud wielder Kadri Gopalnath has tamed it with commendable success. He has already carved a niche for himself in the classical field and needless to say that his opening concert augured well for the season. The concert was rated as one of the best in recent times.

The next day was T.V. Gopalakrishnan's and this Mridangist cum vocal maestro enlightened rasikas on Talas in Hindustani and Karnatak systems making a comparative study of them in a morning session (report published elsewhere). And later that evening he regaled listeners with his musical prowess in a vocal concert. A master of both systems, TVG has a rich baritone voice, tremendous breath control with fantastic reach and volume. All these plus an imaginative flourish and a fine sense of Sahitya made his concert an experience. However one perceived in it a percussive preponderance in swaras. May be because of his involvement as a constant mridangam accompanist!

Among the colourful selections Kalanidhi, Pantuvarali and Mohanam were taken for Alapana and done in a scholarly manner. Kalanidhi Alapana is generally not attempted and in TVG's rendition was educative and enlivening. Tyagaraja's *Chinnanadena* was a popular piece and satiating. His selection for Niraval too spoke of his correct perception. While making a traditional affair of Niraval in Patnam Subramania Iyer's

Manasukeragademo (Hamsadhwani), he scored an innovative point in choosing the Madhyamakala Sahitya for Niraval in Pantuvarali Kriti of Lingappa Naidu.

One felt that the voice assistance lent by his daughter only highlighted the contrast. So thin and high pitched she tended to overmodulate and go 'light' and in a weighty concert that sounded superfluos.

The accompanying artistes were of high calibre. Delhi Sunderarajan (Violin) has scaled heights and played with ease and elan. His Alapanas, Niraval and Swaras were quite responsive and intelligent. Srimushnam Raja Rao (Mridangam) verily anticipated the moves of TVG and played with firm conviction. That helped Udipi Sridhar to play his Manodharma with confidence. Their Thani to Pantuvarali Kriti was a treat.

The New Year concerts were heralded by the Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanas Asthana Vidwan A.K.C. Natarajan's Clarionet recital. This exacting Western instrument has had few takers but AKC has been undauntedly pursuing his art, playing it with great ease. Though he could not draw much support from the second instrument he stood all his own performing with gusto.

Opening with Navaragamalika Varnam he played a rare *Siddhi Vinayakam* in Mohanakalyani. The song and Swaras cascaded warming up the concert when he switched on to Tyagaraja's "*Pariyachakama*" (Vanaspathi) before he settled down to a detailed delineation of Hemavati and Dikshitar's monumental *Sri Kantimati*.

Earlier the maestro gave away the passing Certificates to the 5 successful students in the Diploma in Music (Karnatak vocal classical) Examination conducted by the University of Bombay in May 1994.



The Clarionet 'King' with Sabha Secretaries, Vidyalya Director & K. V. C. Diplomates

Continuing the 'Parampara' Santhanam's sons are making great strides in the concert forum. The recital by the younger of the siblings Maharajapuram Srinivasan (Jan 8) was runaway success reminiscent of the style and standard set by his father late Santhanam.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There have been quite a number of bonus programmes presented by the Sabha this quarter. As an instrument of National Integration a twin programme of Vijaya Siva (a prime disciple of Sangita Kalanidhi late D. K. Jayaraman) in Karnatak vocal and of Dr. S. Srinivasan, a medico-cum-musician in a Hindustani vocal recital was organised by the Sabha in December 1994. Both the programmes were reported to be, of high standards.

Another bonus for the New Year was R. Prasanna's Guitar in Karnatak idiom. Rasikas who thronged the Sabha Foyer that evening (Jan 15) to watch the novelty of the Western Guitar in a Karnatak recital (presented for the first time in Bombay) remained glued to their seats for well over three hours listening to what turned out to be a well chiselled gamaka-oriented classical recital.

That no system however subtle or sensitive is beyond the reach of human genius was evident from the recital of this US based IIT engineer who has successfully tapped this instrument for classical Karnatak nuances. His Sahana (a mode unique to this system) was proof enough of this youngster's mettle and musicianship. Early in the recital he made the instrument 'sing' the joyous "*Vathapi*" (Hamsadhwani) using the phrase "*Nirantharam....*" as his innovative Swara launchpad. Sri Raga Pancharatna soared high in spirit as his deployment of octaval alternations for the Charana Swaras and Sahitya came handy to enhance the beauty of the melodic structure and elevate its Sahitya Bhava. Nalinakanthi was lithesome and lustrous as the name aptly suggests and GNB's *Neepadamegathi* well fitted as an invocation of the Raga Devata

Simhendramadhyamam and Bilahari were the highlights of the evening. The bazz in Guitar has its own grandeur and delving into it Prasanna laid a solid foundation of Simhendramadhyamam and structured it tier by tier to its fine peak. Vasudevachar's *Ninne nammithinaiya* added an evocative dimension with its impressive Niraval-Swaras. A splendours.



Guitarist R. Prasanna in a Karnatak Concert

Bilahari alapana was a decorative prelude to the Sangathi studded *Najeevadhara* that called for immaculate skill in melodic plying.

Violinist Madhavan who finely toed the Guitarist added his own sedate strokes to enhance the grace of the Raga. The orchestral potential of the Kriti was well deployed by the whole team that comprised T.S. Nandakumar (Mridangam) and his young chela Shankar (Ghatam). The sawal-jawab phase of swaras kept the Guitarist-Violinist-Mridangist in an intricate dialogue. The Thani, both the long and short and strong and soft strokes, in their intricate designing and in shifting paces made a well capped finale to this Tyagaraja Kriti.

One thoroughly enjoyed the Tukkadās in reposeful Kapi, soulful Sindhu Bhairavi and blissful Yamuna Kalyani, not to forget the Note in true Western garb.

All told an exhilarating experience.

★ ★ ★ ★

The close of monsoon sessions gave slots to yet some more talents coming up the performance ladder. A family trio - two sisters on vocal, accompanied on violin by the third sister - all in a harmonious synchronisation of voice and instrument, paataanthara and paddhati made their mark. Daughters of Kanjira exponent Rangachari who initially trained them, sisters

Vijayalakshmi and Chitra also known as Mambalam Sisters had their finer grind under B. V. Raman-B.V. Lakshmanan and that stamp was well evident in their singing.

Though prone to relatively fast pace in Alapana, Kriti rendition and Swara singing what impressed was their spontaneity and synchrony. To the extent the Alapana reflected their felicitous Manodharma their rendition of Kritis was not evocative. This contrast was evident in Madhyamavathi.

One of the impressive pieces was *Karpooram Narumo* (Khamas) the current favourite among youngsters. The sisters' Shanmukhapriya Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Tisra Jhampa Khanda Gathi was a well tailored piece with Ragamalika swaras. It is good that youngsters are attempting to tread complex Laya and do their Pallavi exercises with confidence and competence; whether they would ply them with imagination and spontaneity coming out of the tailored garb remains to be seen.

★ ★ ★ ★

After the Shanmukhananda Sangeethanjali (a report on which appeared in the last issue), the Sangeetha Vidyalaya took further strides toward National Integration by organising Talent Exposure Concerts featuring besides students of the Vidyalaya, students from the Dept. of Music, University of Bombay in the Hindustani stream. During October, Sugandha

Atreya doing her KVC Diploma in the Vidyalaya, after an earlier stint under Vidwan A.S. Panchapakesa Iyer and C.A. Radha gave Vocal and Violin solo recitals respectively under the TEC Being trained by Kalyani Sharma both performed to expectations. Sugandha's voice has acquired a gliding grace and having done her homework well she gave a performance marked for competence and confidence. The elaborate Kalyani with Tyagaraja's, Tiruvotriyur Pancharatna Kriti *Sundarini* was a neatly packed rendition from both imaginative and interpretative angles. Hamsadhwani, Abhogi, Natakuranji, Bagheshri in the concert added flavour.

Accompanying her, Radha showed her proficiency on Violin (she is equally a talented vocalist doing her Diploma) with a style having facile flow, precise fingering and soft bowing, all neatly cultivated from her Violin mentor Seetha Ramakrishnan. Gaining more confidence she can make an accomplished artiste. In her Violin solo *Anandabhairavi* (*Mariveragati*) and *Bahudari* (*Brovabharama*) stood out Shankar and Sriram both students of T.A Nandakumar played the percussion with gusto.

In the TEC integration series, Ganga Ramchander (another KVC Diploma student) gave a fare balancing technical skill and imaginative bhava. Trained by Chellamani Bhagavathar and Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar before a stint under Jayalakshmi Santhanam at Hyderabad, she is now under the tutelage of Kalyani Sharma. Her repertoire also included a Marathi composition in Ragamalika thus giving a touch of "integration". Among the rest Abhogi propitiating Lord Ganapathi and Poorvikalyani (Dikshitar's *Meenakshimemudam*) were marked for their presentational proficiency. C.A. Radha gave adequate violin support. The percussion pair Harishankar (Mridangam) and Gururaja Rao (Ghatam) both students of

Jayalakshmi Gopalakrishnan played amiably.

The Sitar solo by Bhupal Dinkar Pan-shikar showed a fine musician in the making. Music runs in his veins. Born and brought up in a musical clime he showed interest in Sitar and learnt under Ustad Munawar Ali Khan of Hyderabad and then under Pt. Ganesh Mohan of Calcutta. Having completed his Diploma, he is doing his Degree course. His delineation of Marwa was a delight, the Alap gradually taking shape, the flawless Taane adding momentum and the Gat composition weaving through different phases. A neat presentation it was. Little wonder that he has bagged prizes in music competitions. Accompanying him on Tabla was Girish Karulkar (a disciple of Pt. Anna Saheb Thatte) who played with equal felicity.

Meenal Prakash Gadgil was another University student who showed her mettle in a vocal recital. A melodious, sustaining voice is her asset and its cultured brilliance shone itself in the Bhup she enunciated. Her tutelage under masters like Mukund Thatte, Pt. Madhukar Joshi and Jal K. Balporia has helped her imbibe a form suited to her voice potential. She concluded with a fine Kabir Bhajan. The Sangat by Kiran Kamath (Harmonium), a disciple of Dilshad Khan, and Girish Sabnis (Tabla), a student of Pt. Vibhav Nageshkar, was inspiring

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In the Savant Day series, the Sabha added two more composers, Papanasam Sivan and Maharaja Swati Tirunal, besides Dikshitar. Dikshitar Day stole the thunder as the participants strove not only to show skill and involvement in the exacting pieces of Dikshitar but also chose to present rare pieces. Opening Dikshitara-jali Supriya Mahadevan, a student of Lakshmi Ganapathy till recently, and now under R. Sakuntala in the Vidyalaya rendered *Gajadeesa* (Natakuranji)

Balaambikayam (Kanada) as new finds besides familiar ones like *Ekambresha Nayike* (Karnataka Suddha Saveri) *Sri Madhurambike* (Kalyani) *Ardhanareeswaram* (Kumudakriya) etc. A good voice with good range is her asset. She should strive to develop her sense of gamakas and add aesthetic beauty to her renditions.

One was happy to note that Visalakshi Hariharan an alumni of the Vidyalaya under R. Sakuntala who had struck a grey patch sometime ago spruced up to reach the proficiency mark. Her *Sri Ranganathaya* (Dhanyasi) *Parandamavathi* (Dharmavathi) and *Sri Raga Navavarna Kriti* among others stood out for textural aesthetics and good rendition.

Bhavani Srinivasan another senior (of the Vidyalaya and a Diplomate) trained under S. Ramachandran and Kalyani Sharma, made an impress of her authentic *paataanthara* and practised finesse. *Parvatha Rajakumari* (Sriranjani), *Vinabheri* (Abheri), *Kasi Visalakshi* (Purvi Kalyani) were noteworthy.

Playing a Violin solo Meera Mahadevan who accompanied some of the main artistes showed her prowess as a budding artiste both as accompanist and soloist. *Akshayalingavibho* (Sankarabharanam), *Neerajakshi* (Hindolam) and *Paradevata* (Dhanyasi) were heavy pieces rendered with ease. Her sound homework has given her solid foundation.

The last two sessions were outstanding for their inherent talent and innate aplomb they displayed. Winner of many prizes in the Sabha's last Annual competitions, Priya Ramachandran, daughter and disciple of Vidushi Jayalakshmi Ramachandran, displayed a voice that is melodious and malleable. With Vishranti and verve, reverence and artistic reticence she rendered a 'pick' of pieces -- *Sankarabhirami* (Kamala Manohari) "*Annapurne*" (Sama) *Marakata Lingam*

(Vasanta) a rare piece, *Arunachala* (Saranaga) and *Akhilandeshwari* (Dwijawanti).

The other, Geetha Murali, of T. R. Balamani School, who is steadily ascending the concert ladder and flourishing the Dance wings made a touching finale of the Anjali. 'Bhava' stood out in her renditions. *Save Brihaspathe* (Atana) the Navagraha Kriti that sounded different from usual "*Paataanthara*" *Sri Subramanyaya Namaste*, (Kambhoji) and *Mamava Pattabhirama* (Manirangu) were true musical "Arpana" to the savant.

Accompanying them on the Violin Meera Mahadevan and Lakshmi Subramaniam (a student of Parvati Shankar) did neat jobs of their roles. Percussion support was lent by L. Shankar; K. Kumar, Sriram - all students of the Vidyalaya under T.S. Nandakumar.

Sivan's Day attracted quite some fresh talents and senior artistes. The sisters Anuradha Badri and Geetha Sankaranarayanan, hailing from T.R. Balamani School, paid their Anjali with sincerity. With voices that needed to be much modulated, the sisters sang with performing punch. *Mooladhara Moorti* (Hamsadhwani) *Sama Gana Lolane* (Hindolam) *Devi Neeye Thunai* were all rendered tastefully.

P.E. Krishnan who has had his early training under Alathur A.S. Panchapakesa Iyer and now under Alamelu Mani sang with an abandon. His voice has range and resonance and he was sincere to *Paataanthara* and *Uchhcharan*, both of which go a long way to make a proper musician. His *Pirava Varam Tharum* (Latangi) *Devi Neeye Thunai* (Kirvani) *Parvathi Nayakane* (Shanmukhapriya) set the tone for the Anjali concerts that evening.

Vasanti Lakshman a student of the Vidyalaya under R. Sakuntala, regaled the rasikas with some popular numbers like

"*Kaa Vaa Vaa*" (Varali) "*Kapali*" (Mohanam) "*Enna Thavam*" (Kapi) etc.,

Besides providing accompaniment Ranjani Ramakrishnan gave a Violin solo. Sweet and tuneful she played "*Ananda Natanam Adinar*" (Kambhoji), and the rare *Balakrishanan* (Dhanyasi) besides *Ksheerasagara Shayana* (Purvikalyani). Trained by her mother Seetha Ramakrishnan, Ranjani shows promise to shape up as a good soloist.

Enthusiasm continued unabated on Maharaja Swati Tirunal Day but the only jarring note was the practice of some participants resorting to script singing.

Janaki Krishnamurthy and L. Subramaniam of the Vidyalaya gearing up for the Shanmukha Sangeetha Mani Certificate examination under Kalyani Sharma presented a neatly packed mini concert comprising a Kriti, *Narasimha* (Arabhi), *Ragamalika* (*Sanantham*), *Padam Kanthanodu* (Neelambari) *Javali* (*Itusahasamulu* (*Saindavi*) and *Tillana*.

Kavita Narayan and Vaishnavi, both students of Vijayalakshmi Nathan, rendered some choice Kritis. Both sang with open throated Voice and could modulate to achieve better aesthetic effects. Kavita enjoyed her rendition of "*Pankajalochana*" (Kalyani), *Krupaya Paalaya Sowre* (Charukesi) and *Pahi Jagajjanani* (Vachaspathi). And Vaishnavi stuck to the 'pataanthara' of "*Smarajanaka Shubhacharita*" (Behag), *Pahi Parvatha* (Arabhi) and *Santhatham* (Bilahari).

Prashant Prasad should be congratulated for his 'feel for the Sahitya' in his presentation of *Gopanandana* (Bhushavali), "*Paramapurusham*" (Lalithapanchamam) *Sarasa Sama* (Khamas). Chandrasekhara Bhagavathar's firm Raga moorings were perceptible in his fare. Earlier more or less the same compositions plus *Padmanabha Pahi*" (*Hindolam*) *Paripalayamam* (Ritigowla) were rendered by Raji Subbaraman, a teacher in the suburbs.

The finale of the Anjali was a jet set tight packed sample concert, right from Varnam to Bhajan with a number of select Kritis in between presented by Shobha Ramesh. Endowed with a good voice and training under T.S. Anantharaman and late D.K. Jayaraman, Shobha's fare would have clicked had she restrained her speed and avoided excessive frills and decorative motifs.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A 2-day workshop conducted for the benefit of students of Music by the eminent musician-musicologist-journalist Sakuntala Narasimhan on "Gharanas"* and "Concert Planning" was a rewarding experience.

Her method of involving the students in the discussion, inspiring their imagination and directing them into the right mode of study and thinking and the lec-dem with cassette "clips" were laudable. More such study sessions could be profitably organised if students of music turn up in sufficient numbers.

Kinnari

* An article on "Gharanas" by Sakuntala Narasimhan from an Annual Number is reproduced elsewhere in this issue.

On January 6, 1995 the *Avarttanam* came to an end and the hands were stilled for ever. There were no more rhythmic cycles to be gone over again and again, no more repetitions. It was indeed *Samavarttanam*, return, return to his Maker. He had lived through the rhythms of life to the full and the end came in silence, at a time when silence produces its own music.

The world of Karnatak music is poorer for the passing of Shri Trichi S. Raghava Iyer. People in Bombay have reason to be particularly sad because it was in this city that he spent many years of his life, first as Professor of the Mridangam, and later as Principal, of the Bharatiya College of Music.

Shri Raghava Iyer came of a distinguished family of musicians and represented a great *Parampara*. Among his brothers was the famous vocalist, the late Shri Srinivasa Iyer (one of the "Alathur Brothers"). His younger brother, Shri A.S. Panchapakesa Iyer, had preceded him as Principal of the Bharatiya College of Music and is the author of a number of valuable books specially written for students of music.

Shri Raghava Iyer's guru was Tinniyam Venkatarama Iyer, who was particularly known for his "*Panchanadai Tirmanas*". During his long career Shri Raghava Iyer accompanied many a leading vocalist, but he will be chiefly remembered as a teacher. Before coming to Bombay he was for some years Professor at Banaras Hindu University. He would often quip about it, saying that he had been an acamedician without any academic qualifications. But the fact is that Shri Raghava Iyer was disciplined in the school of life and moulded by tradition--that is why he could successfully function both as professor and as practitioner of the art of the Mridangam. No more testimony is needed for his musical genius than the fact that a number of Mridanga vidvans who occupy the front rank in music today were taught by him; they include Palghat Raghu, T. Krishnan, Mannargudi Iswaran, Melakkaveri Balaji, Bombay Balaji and Sriram are among his students who show much promise. Shri Raghava Iyer had to his credit a guide to mridangam playing.

A number of vidvans sought his help in formulating *tirmanams* to be presented in their own recitals. His distinctive style of playing earned him many admirers. Shri Kalyanasundaram Pillai of the Rajarajeswari Bharatanatya Kala Mandir has this story to tell about him. Once the renowned Tavill Vidvan Valayappatti on a visit to Bombay, happened to listen to Shri Govindaraja Pillai's grandson practising on the mridangam. He was struck by a particular passage and asked the boy to repeat the same. He was curious to know the name of the master who had taught the youngster. It was a case of a Taval Vidvan beating the drum for the Mridanga Vidvan.

Shri Raghava Iyer had a rough exterior but he was gentle at heart and full of consideration for others. He was a devoted man who never missed his *pūja-path*. He had a quiet pride about his own art and could be uncompromising about it--it is said that it was after an unhappy experience as an accompanist that he decided not to play the mridangam for anybody. This does not mean he was a vain man or that he had a large ego. He was extremely self-effacing-- indeed he hid his lamp under a bushel.

Lakshmi Gopalakrishna.

‘ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி’ டி.கே. முர்த்தியின்

“லய வின்யாஸம்”

(ஸங்கீத வித்வத்ஸபையின் 68வது ஆண்டு இசை மாநாட்டில்
டி. கே. முர்த்தி அளித்த தலைமையுரை)

1929-ஆம் ஆண்டு தொடங்கி “ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி” எனும் விருதினை வழங்கிவரும் இம்மாபெரும் ஸங்கீத ஸ்தாபனம், சுமார் 37 ஆண்டுகளுக்குப் பின், அதாவது 1966இல் முதன் முதலாக ஒரு லயவாத்திய விற்பன்னருக்கு பாலக்காடு மணி அய்யர் அவர்களுக்கு இவ்விருதினை வழங்கியது. அதன் பின்னர் 28 ஆண்டுகள் கழித்து, எனக்கு இந்தக் கௌரவம் அளிக்கப்படுகின்றது. ஸங்கீத வித்வத் ஸபைக்கு என் மன்மார்ந்த நன்றியைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். இவ்வாறு, லயவாத்தியக் கலைஞர்களைக் கௌரவிப்பதில் இத்தனைக் கால இடைவெளி அவசியமா என்று எண்ணத் தோன்றுகிறது. “லயவாத்திய”ங்களில் மிருதங்கம் இன்றியமையாத, தனிச் சிறப்புடைய, உயர்ந்த ஸ்தானத்தை பெற்று விளங்குகிறது என்பதில் இரண்டாவது கருத்துக்கு இடமில்லை. எனினும் “லயவாத்தியம்” என்னும் போது, அது மிருதங்கம் மட்டுமல்ல, தவில், கஞ்சிரா, கடம்பிப்படி எத்தனையோ. அந்த வாத்தியங்களிலும் மேன்மையுற்று, அனுபவம் மிகுந்து விளங்கும் கலைஞர்களுக்கும் இவ்வித விருது வழங்கிக் கௌரவிக்க, மியூஸிக் அகாடமி ஆவன செய்யவேண்டும் என்பது என் வேண்டுகோள்.

“தாயகம்” தஞ்சை

திருவனந்தபுரத்துக்கு அருகாமையிலுள்ள நெய்யாற்றங்கரா என்றவூரில் பிறந்த நான், ஏழாவது வயதில், என் முத்த

ஸவேராதரர் கையாண்டு வந்த மிருதங்க வாத்தியத்தில் நாட்டங்கொண்டு அதை ஓரளவு அவரிடமே கற்றேன். அவ்வப்போது சில ஹரிகதா காலக்ஷேபங்களில் பங்குபெற்று வந்த எனக்கு, என் எட்டாம் பிராயத்தில், ஹரிகேசநல்லூர் டாக்டர் முத்தையா பாகவதர் அவர்களின் ஹரிகதைகளை வாசிக்கும் அதிர்ஷ்டம் கிடைத்தது. எனது வாழ்க்கையில் கிடைக்கும் அனைத்துச் சிறப்புகளுக்கும் அடிக்கோலிய நானும் அதுதான். அன்றைய நிகழ்ச்சியைக் கவைக்கவந்த, மிருதங்க மாமேதை, தஞ்சாவூர் வைத்தியநாத அய்யர் அவர்கள், நிகழ்ச்சி முடிவுற்றதும், “என்னோடு நீ தஞ்சாவூருக்கு வருகிறாயா? உனக்கு மிருதங்கம் கற்பிக்கிறேன்,” என்று கனிவோடு அழைத்தார். அன்று அந்த லயசிங்கத்தின் பின்னே நடைபெட்டிக் தஞ்சைக்கு சென்றவன் தான். கலைகளுக்கும், கலாச்சாரத்துக்கும் பெயர் மிகுந்த அவ்வூரே என் தாயகமாகிவிட்டது. என் குருநாதர் அவர்கள் என்னையொரு சீடனெனக் கருதாமல், தான் பெற்ற மகனெனப் பேணினார்; பயிற்றுவித்தார்.

இணையற்று விளங்கியது எங்கள் குருகுலம் ஒரே சமயத்தில் குறைந்த படசம் 50 அல்லது 60 சிஷ்யர்கள் இருப்பார்கள். யாருடைய கைவரகத்தோடும் எவ்வாறு கற்பிப்பதென்று அறிந்தேயில்லை. என் குருநாதருக்கு மீட்டை கிடையாது. ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி, ஸ்ரீ டி.எம். தியாகராஜன்

அவர்களின் தம்பியுமான தம்புஸ்வாமி என்பவரும் நானும் ஒரு ஜோடி; எங்கள் குருநாதருக்கு எங்களிடம் பிரியம் மிகுதி. ஸ்ரீ தியாகராஜன் அல்லது தஞ்சாவூர் ஸ்ரீ லக்ஷ்மீநாராயண பாகவதர் பாட்டுடன், எங்கள் ஸாதகம், தினந்தோறும் பலமணி நேரம் நடைபெறும். “உருப்படிக்கு வாசித்தல்” என்ற அம்சத்தில், மிருதங்க வித்வான் ஸ்ரீ மஹாலிங்கம் பிள்ளை அவர்களும், எங்களுக்கு அவ்வப்போது வழிகாட்டுவார்.

நான் இளம்பிராயத்திலே முத்தையா பாகவதர், மழவை சுப்பராம பாகவதர், டைகர் வரதாச்சாரியார் மற்றும் பல மஹாவித்வான்களுக்கு மிருதங்கம் வாசித்து அனுபவம் பெற்றேன். “இவருக்கு நம்மால் வாசிக்க முடியுமா?” என்றே, “இந்த வித்வான் சிறுவனாகிய நம்மைப் போட்டுக் கொள்வாரா?” என்றெல்லாம் அப்போது என் நெஞ்சத்தில் அலை மோதும். அந்தக்கட்டங்களில் எல்லாம் என்னை ஊக்குவித்துத் திறமையோடு செயல்படுமாறு செய்த சூத்திரதாரி, என் குருநாதர் அவர்களே. இப்போது, இந்த 71 ஆவது பிராயத்தில் பல இளைஞர்களுக்கும் வாசித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்.

இந்த இரு காலக்கட்டங்களுக்கு மிடையே எத்தனை மாறுதல்கள்! எத்தனைப் புதுமைகள்! சிறப்பாகப் பாடும் அல்லது வாத்தியங்களை இசைக்கும் திறமை படைத்த இசைவாணர்கள் இப்போதும் இருக்கிறார்கள். புகழைச் சம்பாதிப்பது, பொருளைத் தேடுவது என்ற எண்ணம் பொதுவாக எல்லோருக்கும் இருப்பது சகஜந்தான். ஆயினும், அவ்விரண்டையும் மட்டுமே குறிக்கோளாகக் கொண்ட நிலைமை ஒருபுறம் உருவாகி வரும் இக்காலத்தில்,

எத்தனையோ புதுப்பாடல்கள், புதிய ராகங்கள், கனல் பறக்கும் லய விய வஹாரங்கள் இவற்றுக்கும் குறைவில்லை யென்பதைக் குறிப்பிடத்தான் வேண்டும்.

‘இரு’ குரு

ஒரு கலைஞன் என்றால் அவனுக்கு இரண்டு குருமார் உண்டென்பார்கள். பயிற்றுவிக்கும் ஆசான் ஒருவர், மற்றொருவரின் பெயர் ‘அனுபவம்’. அந்தக் காலத்தில் தஞ்சைக்கு விஜயம் செய்து, மராத்தியிலேயே ஹரிகதைகள் செய்வோரான விஷ்ணு பாவா, லட்டு பாவா போன்றவர்கள் மற்றும் நம் தமிழகத்தைச் சேர்ந்த மாங்குடி சிதம்பர பாகவதர், சூலமங்கலம் வைத்தியநாத பாகவதர், போன்றோரின் ஹரிகதைகளில் பங்குபெற்று, அவற்றில் இடம் பெற்று வந்த ஐந்தடி உச்சி, ஏழடி உச்சி போன்ற தாளவகைகளுக்கும் த்ருபத், அபங், கட்டகா, மத்தகோகிலம் போன்ற பாடல் வகைகளுக்கும் எவ்வாறு வாசிக்க வேண்டுமெனக் கற்றேன். மஹாராஷ்டிர ஸமாஜம் ஸபா நாயகர் வீடு ஆகிய இடங்களில் வாரந்தோறும் நடைபெற்ற பஜனைகளில் கலந்துகொண்டு, அதிலுள்ள முறைகளை அறிந்தேன். ‘ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி’ தஞ்சாவூர் பொன்னைய்யா பிள்ளை வீட்டுச் சிலம்பக் கூடத்தில், என் ஓய்வு நேரங்களில் பலமுறை பயிற்சி அல்லது ஒத்திகைகளிலே வாசித்துப் பரதக்கலைக்கு மிருதங்கம் வாசிக்கும் பாங்கினைப் பயின்றேன். மேடையிலுங்கூட நான் வாசித்ததுண்டு. குருநாதரின் இல்லத்துக்கு வரும் பெரிய வித்வான்களைப் பாடச் சொல்லி, என்னை வாசிக்கச் செய்வார் அவர். அவ்வாறு, ஒரு சமயம் மழவை சுப்பராம பாகவதர் அவர்கள் மாளவி ராகத்தில், லக்ஷ்மீச தாளத்தில் பாடிய

பல்லவி என் நினைவில் பசுமையாய் இருக்கிறது.

என்னை அன்போடு ஊக்கு வித்தவர்கள் பலர். புதுக்கோட்டை தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை அவர்கள் என்னை மிருதங்கம் வாசிக்கச் செய்து, தாம் கஞ்சிரா வாசித்துள்ளார். முத்தையா பாகவதர், அரியக்குடி ராமானுஜ அய்யங்கார், மஹாராஜபுரம் விஸ்வநாதய்யர், டைகர் வரதாச்சாரியார், புல்லாங்குழல் மாலி, ராஜமாணிக்கம் பிள்ளை, சௌடய்யா - இவ்வாறு அப்பட்டியல் நீளும். பலகாலம் டாக்டர் திருமதி எம்.எஸ். சுப்புலக்ஷ்மி அவர்களுக்கு மிருதங்கக்கலைஞராக நான் இருந்ததை, இங்கு, பெருமையோடு நினைவு கூறுகிறேன். எடின்பரோ, ஐ.நா. ஸபை, ரோம் கச்சேரிகள் - இப்படியாக எனக்குப் பல சிறப்புகள், அவரோடு மேடையை நான் பகிர்ந்து கொண்ட காலகட்டத்தில் கிடைத்தன வென்பது மறக்க முடியாத விஷயம்.

இசையரங்குகளில் முதன்முதலாக “இரட்டை மிருதங்கம்” ‘ஏன் மூன்று மிருதங்கங்கள் பங்குபெறுவதை அறிமுகப் படுத்தியவர், என் குருநாதர்.’ தஞ்சாவூர் வைத்தியநாதய்யர் அவர்களேயாவர். தம்மோடு என்னையும், தம்புஸ்வாமியையும் வாசிக்கச் செய்தவர் அவர். கல்கத்தாவில் நான் தொடர்ந்து தங்கும் நாட்களில் அம்ருத் ஹஸேன்கான் என்பவரிடம், தபலா வாசிக்க வேண்டிய முறைகளை அறிந்தேன். தவிர, சிறிது சிறிதாக கஞ்சிரா, கொன்னக்கோல் முதலியவற்றிலும் பரிச்சயம் பெற்றேன். சில கச்சேரிகளில் பாலக்காடு ஸ்ரீ மணி அய்யர் அல்லது பழனி ஸ்ரீ சுப்பிரமணிய பிள்ளை கஞ்சிராவுடன் நான் மிருதங்கம் வாசித்ததுண்டு. இவையெல்லாம் என்

இசையறிவை வளர்த்துக் கொள்ளத் துணை நின்றவை.

கலையில் ‘லயம்’

மிருதங்கக் கலையென்பது மிகச் சிறப்பானவொன்றாகும். மழைநீர் சொட்டுவதால் எழுந்த ஒலியைக் கேட்டு, ஸ்வாதி என்பவர் மிருதங்கத்தை உருவாக்கினார் என்று பரதமுனியின் “நாட்டிய சாஸ்திரம்” கூறும். இதனைத் திருமால், நந்திகேஸ்வர் போன்றோர் கையாண்டதாகப் புராணங்கள் தெரிவிக்கின்றன. லய வின்யாஸம் செய்வதற்காக மட்டுமே தோற்றம் பெற்ற வாத்தியமல்ல அது. முதலாவதாக, அதுவொரு பக்கவாத்தியமே என்ற நினைவு, அதனைக் கையாளும் கலைஞர்களுக்கு தேவை. பாட்டை எந்த அளவுக்கு நமது வாசிப்பினால் உயர்த்தி, அழகு செய்ய முடியுமோ, அதைச் செய்வதுதான் மிருதங்கக் கலைஞர்களின் முக்கிய கடமை. ‘பாட்டுக்கு வாசிப்பது’ என்னும் அம்சம் தற்காலம் குறைந்து வருவதைக் காண வருத்தமாயிருக்கிறது. மிருதங்கக் கலையில் ஈடுபடும் இளங்கலைஞர்கள், இதை மனதில் நன்கு பதித்து, அந்த கோணத்திலும் தம் கவனத்தைச் செலுத்து வேண்டுமென கோருகிறேன். மிருதங்கக் கலையைப் போதிக்கும் கல்லூரிகளில், பயிற்சிக் காலத்தில் ஓராண்டினை “பாட்டு அல்லது பிற இசைக்கருவி”களுக்கு வாசிப்பதில் பயிற்சி அளிக்க ஒதுக்க வேண்டும். வாய்ப்பாட்டுக்கு அல்லது வாத்தியங்களுக்கு வாசிப்பது, நிரவலுக்கு அல்லது ஸ்வரப் பிரஸ்தாரத்துக்கு வாசிப்பது, போன்ற பல்வேறு தனித்தன்மை கொண்ட முறைகளைக் கற்பிக்க வேண்டும். இளைஞர்களாக உள்ள கலைஞர்கள், தம்மைவிட வயதிலும், அனுபவத்திலும் மூத்தோராக

உள்ளவர்களிடம் மரியாதை வைத்து நடப்பதோடு, அவர்களிடமுள்ள சிறப்பு அம்சங்களை எல்லாம் கிரஹித்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டுமென்றும் கோருகிறேன்.

என் பூர்வஜன்ம ஸ்கந்தத் தினாலும், என் குருநாதரின் அளவற்ற அருளாசிகளினாலுமே இந்த மஹோன்னதமான மிருதங்கக் கலை எனக்கு லபித்தது.

புகழ் மிக்கவர்கள் அல்லது வயதில் பெரியோர் அல்லது புருஷர்களாகவுள்ள கலைஞர்களுக்கு மட்டுமே பக்க வாத்தியம் வாசிப்பதென்ற வழக்கம் எனக்கு எப்போதுமே கிடையாது. பல விதங்களால் புகழைப் பெற்றுவிட்டுப் பின்னர் விதிகளுக்கு வாசிப்பதில்லை யென்று நான் கூறுவதில்லை. புகழ் என்னவென்று அறியா இளையோராயினும், தகுதி இருக்குமெனில் நான் வாசிக்கத் தயங்குவதில்லை. நமக்கு புகழ் இல்லாத காலத்தில், 'சிறுவன்தானே' என்று நம்மை யாரேனும் ஒதுக்கி யிருந்தால்? என்ற உணர்வு கொண்டவன் நான்.



என் இசை வாழ்க்கையை தொடங்கிய நான் முதலாக, இன்றளவிலும் என்னை ஆதரித்து வந்துள்ள வித்வான்கள், விதுஷிகள், ரஸிகர்கள், இசை நிறுவனங்கள் எல்லோருக்கும் என் நன்றி கூறுகிறேன். இசைக்குப் பேராதரவு நல்கி வளர்ப்பதில் தனிப் பெரும் ஸ்தானம் வகிக்கும் நமது ஸங்கீத வித்வத் சபை, இம்மாநாட்டின் தலைமைப் பொறுப்பைத் தந்து விருது வழங்கி கௌரவிப்பதற்கு என் உளமார்ந்த நன்றியை உரித்தாக்குகிறேன்.

என்னை இப்பூமியில் கொணர்ந்த என் பெற்றோர், எனக்கு முதன்முதலாக மிருதங்கத்தை பயிற்றுவித்த ஆசானாகிய என் தமையனார், என்னை மகனென வளர்த்து, லயமெனும் ஸாகரத்தின் கரைக்கு வழிகாட்டி, உருவாக்கி, இவ்வித பெருமைகளாகத் தம் நல்லாசிகளைப் பொழியும் என் குருநாதர் தஞ்சாவூர் ஸ்ரீ வைத்தியநாதய்யர் அவர்கள் ஆகியோரின் பொற்பாதகமலங்களில் சிரந்தாழ்த்தி என் இதயம் நிறைந்த நமஸ்காரங்களை அற்பணிக்கிறேன்.

என்றும் வாழும் இசைத்தமிழ்

இராம. வீரப்பன்

உலகில் தோன்றி வழங்கும் எண்ணற்ற மொழிகளில் இலக்கிய வளமும் பண்பாட்டு வளமும் செறிந்த மூத்த முதல் மொழியாகத் திகழ்வது நம் தமிழ் மொழியே என்பது அறிஞர்கள் பலரும் ஏற்றுக் கொண்ட உண்மையாகும்.

தமிழில் கிடைக்கின்ற முதல் நூலாகிய "தொல்காப்பியம்" 2500 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முற்பட்ட பழமை வாய்ந்தது. "தொல்காப்பியத்தில்" வரும் "பண்ணத்தி," "பரிபாடல்" முதலிய செய்யுளியற் பகுதிகள் தமிழிசைக் கூறுகளை விளக்குவனவேயாகும்.

இயல், இசை, நாடகம் எனும் முப்பிரிவுகளைக் கொண்டு முத்தமிழ் சங்க காலத்திலேயே சிறப்புற்றிருந்ததை "தெரிமான் தமிழ் மும்மைத் தென்னம் பொருப்பன்" என வரும் பரிபாடல் தொடரால் நாம் அறியலாம்.

பண்டைக்காலத்தில் தமிழிசைக் கென்றே வாழ்ந்த பாணர்கள் வாழ்கையைப் பெரும்பாணற்றுப்படை, "சிறுபாணற்றுப்படை," "கூத்தர் ஆற்றுப்படை" (மலைபடுகடாம்), "பொருநர் ஆற்றுப்படை" ஆகிய பத்துப்பாட்டு நூல்கள் விளங்க எடுத்துரைப்பதைக் காண்கின்றோம்.

எட்டுத்தொகை நூல்களில் "புறநானூறு" மற்றும் "அகநானூறு" முதலான நூல்களில் பாணர்களுடைய பேரியாழ், சீறியாழ் பற்றிய குறிப்புகளும், பாடல், ஆடல் பற்றிய செய்திகளும் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளன. "பரிபாடல்" முழுமையும் இசைப்பாட்டே. அப்பரிபாடலை பாடிய ஆசிரியர் பெயர், பாடலுக்குரிய இசையின் பெயர், இசை வகுத்தவர் பெயர் ஆகிய குறிப்புகள் அவற்றில் காணப்படுகின்றன.

கி.பி. 2 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் தோன்றியதாக மதிப்பிடப்படும் "சிலப்பதிகாரக்" காவியம் தமிழிசையும்,

நாடகத்தையும் பற்றிய அரிய செய்திகளை அறிய உதவும் கருவூலமாகத் திகழக் காண்கிறோம்.

சிலப்பதிகார" ததிற்கு உரை வரைந்த அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் "சிலப்பதிகார காலத்தில் மிகுதியான இசை நாடகத் தமிழ் நூல்கள் வழங்கிலிருந்தன என்று தெரிவிக்கிறார். "பெருநாளை" "பெருங்குருகு," "பஞ்சபாரதி," "முறுவல்", சயந்தம், "குணநூல்", "செயிற்றியம்", "இசை நுணுக்கம்", "இந்திரகாளியம்" "பஞ்சமரபு", "பரதசேனாபதியம்", "மதிவாணனார் நாடகத் தமிழ் நூல்", "இசைத் தமிழ்ப் பதினாறு படலம்" போன்ற பல நூல்களை அடியார்க்கு நல்லார் எடுத்துக்காட்டுவதோடு "பரதம், அகத்தியம் முதலாக உள்ள தொன்னூல்கள் இருந்தன", என்று குறிப்பிடுவது கொண்டு, சங்க காலத்திலேயே தமிழகத்தில் தமிழிசை மிக உன்னதமான இடத்தைப் பெற்று விளங்கிய உண்மையை நாம் உணரலாம்.

கி.பி. மூன்றாம் நூற்றாண்டின் களப்பியர் தமிழகத்திற்குள் புகுந்து தமிழ்க்கலையையும், மொழியையும், சமயத்தையும் நலிவுறச் செய்துள்ளனர்.

ஆயினும் கி.பி. 5 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டு முதலாகவே மீண்டும் தமிழ்க் கலைகள் ஏற்றம் பெறத் தொடங்கிவிட்டன. காரைக் காலம்மையார் இக்காலத்தில் தோன்றி வாழ்ந்து நட்பாடை, இந்தளம் ஆகிய பண்களில் பக்திநூல்களைச் செய்து தமிழிசை மறுமலர்ச்சிக்கு வித்திட்டுள்ளார்.

கி.பி. ஏழாம் நூற்றாண்டில் திருஞானசம்பந்தரும், திருநாவுக்கரசரும் தோன்றி, சிவனருள் பெற்று கணக்கற்ற பண்களை அருள் வெள்ளமாகப் பொழிந்துள்ளார்கள்.

திருஞானசம்பந்தருக்குச் சிவ பெருமான திருக்கோவக்காவில் "பொற்றாளம்" அருளினார் என்பது தமிழிசை தொடர்பாக நாம் நினைவு கொள்ள வேண்டிய ஒன்று. திரு நீலகண்ட யாழ்ப்பாணர் தம் துணைவியாருடன் திருஞானசம்பந்தருடைய குழாத்தில் சேர்ந்துகொண்டு திருஞானசம்பந்தரின் பாடல்களை யாழில் மீட்டி வாசித்து வந்தார் என்பதும் வரலாறு.

திருஞானசம்பந்தர் தமிழ்நாடு முழுவதும் வலம் வந்து சமயத்தோடு தமிழிசையைப் பரப்பும் செயலை வீரத்துடன் மேற்கொண்டுள்ளார். இக்காலையின் துணையோடு தமிழ் மக்களைத் தட்டி எழுப்பி, தமிழ் மக்களுக்கு விழிப்பை உண்டாக்கித் தமிழகத்தில் மறுமலர்ச்சியை உண்டாக்கியவர் திருஞானசம்பந்தரேயாவார்.

1300 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்னாலேயே தமிழைச் "செந்தமிழ்", "இன்தமிழ்" "பைந்தமிழ்", "வண்தமிழ்", "தண்டமிழ்", "ஞானத்தமிழ்", "கன்னித்தமிழ்", "கலைமலியும் தமிழ்", "சங்கமலி தமிழ்" என்று பற்பல அடைமொழியிட்டுப் பெருமைப்படுத்தியதோடு தம்மையும் "தமிழ் ஞானசம்பந்தம்" என்றே அழைத்துக்கொண்ட தமிழிசைச் செம்மல் திருஞானசம்பந்தரே ஆவார்.

"நானும் இன்னிசையால் தமிழ் பரப்பும் ஞானசம்பந்தன்" என்பது சுந்தரமூர்த்தி நாயனாரின் பாராட்டாகும். ஏழிசையின் வடிவமே திருஞானசம்பந்தர் என்பதைச் சேக்கிழாரும்.

"தேனக்க மலர்கொன்றை
செஞ்சடையார் சீர் தொடுக்கும்
கானத்தின் எழுமிற்பைக்
கண்களிப்பக் கண்டார்கள்"

என்று பெரிய புராணத்தில் பாடக்காண்கிறோம்.

இவ்வாறு இசை வளர்த்த திருஞானசம்பந்தருடன் திருநாவுக்கரசர், சுந்தரமூர்த்தி நாயனார் ஆகியோரும் தேவார அருள் பாடல்களைப் பாடி, அவர்கள்

காலத்திற்குப் பின் தோன்றிய சேந்தனார் முதலான பல அருளாளர்கள் திருவிசைப்பா, திருப்பல்லாண்டு முதலான பல இசைப்பாடல்களைப் பாடித்தமிழிசைக்கு ஏற்றம் சேர்த்துள்ளனர்.

திருத்தக்கதேவர் தாம் இயற்றிய "சிந்தாமணி" காவியத்தில் இசைத்தமிழ் பற்றிய பல அரிய செய்திகளைக் கூறியுள்ளார். இக்காவியத்தில் காந்தருவதத்தை தன்னை யார் யாழிசைப் போட்டியில் வெல்கிறாரோ அவரையே தான் மணப்பதாக விரதம் பூண்டிருக்கிறார். யாழ் போட்டியில் "சீவகன்" கலந்து கொள்கிறான். மீட்டும்படி தனக்குக் கொடுக்கப்பட்ட பல யாழ்களையும், இது மெல்லிய மரத்தால் ஆனது. இது அழகின் மரத்தால் ஆனது, இது புண்ணுள்ள மரத்தால் ஆனது, இது இடியேறுண்ட மரம், இது வெந்த மரம் என்று அவற்றின் குற்றத்தை கூறி நீக்கி, நல்ல யாழைப் பெற்று, அதன் நரம்பில் மயிர் சிக்கியிருக்க, அந்நரம்பையும் நீக்கி, தானே கொண்டு வந்திருந்த நரம்பை அமைத்து பின் மீட்டிப் போட்டியில் வென்றான் என ஆசிரியர், இசைக்கருவிகளைக் கையாளும் திறம் முதலானவற்றை விளக்கியுரைக்க காண்கிறோம்.

கொங்குவேளிர் தாம் பாடிய "பெருங்கதை" காவியத்தில் உதயணன் கோடபதி என்ற யாழ் மீட்டி யானையை அடக்கிய செய்தியைக் கூறியிருக்கிறார். இப்பெருங்கதைக் காவியம் கி.பி. 7 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டிலேயே எழுதப்பட்டது என்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது.

கி.பி. 7 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் மகேந்திரவர்ம பல்லவன் புதுக்கோட்டை மாவட்டம் குடிமியான் மலையில் அமைந்திருக்கும் கல்வெட்டு, தமிழிசை பற்றிய பல சிறப்பான செய்திகளைக் கூறுவதும் இங்கு நினைவில் கொள்ளத்தக்கது.

கி.பி. 11 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் தொடக்கத்தில் தமிழகத்தை ஆண்டிருந்த முதலாம் இராஜாஜ சோழன், நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பியைத் துணைக்கொண்டு

திருமுறைகளைத் தொகுத்தான் என்பதும், திரு எருக்கத்தம் புலியூர்ப்பாணர் குலப்பெண்ணொருத்தியைக் கொண்டுப் பதிகங்களுக்கும் பண்வகுத்தருளினான் என்பதும் தமிழிசை வரலாற்றில் ஏற்றம் பெறும் செய்திகளாகும். இதனை ஒட்டிவரும் காலத்திலேயே நாதமுனிகள் நாலாயிரத் திவ்விய பிரபந்தங்களையும் தொகுத்து தமிழிசைக்கு மகத்தான மறுமலர்ச்சியை உண்டாக்கியிருக்கிறார்.

கி.பி. 12 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் தமிழகத்தை ஆண்ட முதலாம் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் தானே சிறந்த இசை வல்லுநனாக விளங்கியுள்ளான். இவன் தேவியின் பெயரும் ஏழிசை வல்லபி என இசைப் பெயராகவே இருப்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது. இசைக்குத் தெய்வமான சரஸ்வதியும் பாராட்டும்படி குலோத்துங்கன் இயற்றிய பாடல்களை ஏழிசைவல்லபி பாடினான். என்பது "கலிங்கத்துப்பரணி" கூறும் செய்தி.

கி.பி. 15 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் அருணகிரிநாதர் தோன்றி வாழ்ந்து, இசைத்தமிழுக்கு ஒப்பற்ற உயர்வு சேர்த்துள்ளார். இசைத்தமிழை விரும்பு வோருக்கு வற்றாத இசைச் சுரங்கமாக பல்லாயிரம் திருப்புகழ்ப் பாடல்களைப் பாடியுள்ளார். "பூதவேதாள வகுப்பு" என்ற ஒரே பாடலில் பலதாள வகைகளையும், 17 பண்களையும் 12 இசைக் கருவிகளையும், அவர் குறிப்பிட்டிருப்பது, அவர் காலத்தில் தமிழிசை எத்தனை பிரசித்தி பெற்றிருந்தது என்பதை உலகிற்குத் தெளிவுப்படுத்தும்.

கி.பி. 16 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் ஆரம்பத்தில் வாழ்ந்திருந்த சீர்காழி முத்துத்தாண்டவர் தமிழில் முதன் முதலாக பல்லவி, அநுபல்லவி சரணம் என்ற அமைப்பை கொண்ட கீர்த்தனங்களைப்பாடினார். என்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது.

"சேவிக்க வேண்டுமையா சீதம்பரம்
சேவிக்க வேண்டுமையா"

"அரு மருந்தொரு தனி மருந்திது
அம்பலத்தே கண்டேனே"

"மாணிக்கவாசகர் பே ரெனக்குத்
தரவல்லாயோ அறியேன்",

முதலான பல பாடல்களை அவர்கள் பாடியிருப்பதை இசை விற்பன்னர்கள் இன்றும் பாடி மகிழ்கிறார்கள்.

முத்துத் தாண்டவர் போல தில்லை நடராஜப்பெருமான் மீது பல கீர்த்தனங்களும், பதங்களும் பாடிய மற்றோர் இசைவானார் தில்லை விடங்கள் மாரிமுத்தாபிள்ளை என்பவர் இவர் 18ம் நூற்றாண்டில் வாழ்ந்த பெரும் புலவர்.

பல்லவி

"காலைத்தூக்கி நின்றாடும் தெய்வமே என்னைக்
கைதூக்கி யான் தெய்வமே (காலை)
அனுபல்லவி
"வேலைத் தூக்கும் பிள்ளை
துனைப் பெற்ற தெய்வமே
மின்னும் புகழ்சேர் தில்லைப்
பொன்னம்பலத்திலொரு (காலை)

சரணம்

1. " செங்கையில் மான் தூக்கிக்
சீவந்த மழுவும் தூக்கி
அங்கத்திலொரு பெண்ணை
அனுதினமும் தூக்கிக்
கங்கையைத் திங்களைக்
கத்தித் தடையில் தூக்கி
இங்கும் அங்குமாய்த் தேடி
இருவர் கண்டறியாத (காலை)

2. " நந்தி மத்தளம் தூக்க
நாரதர் யாழ் தூக்க
தொந்திமென்றயன் தாளம்
கூதியொரு தூக்கச்
சீந்தை மகிழ்ந்து வானோர்
சென்னிமேல் சுந்த தூக்க
முந்தும் வலியுடைய
முயலகன் உனைத் தூக்க" (காலை)

என்ற இவரது கீர்த்தனம் இன்றுவரை பிரசித்தமாய் இசைக்கச்சேரிகளுக்கும், பரத நாட்டியங்களுக்கும் பயன்பட்டு வருகிறது.

சிறந்த இசைவாணராகத் திகழ்ந்ததோடு இலக்கிய கர்த்தராகவும் திகழ்ந்த தில்லை விடங்கள் மாரிமுத்தாபிள்ளை "புலியூர் வெண்பா", "சிதம்பரேசர் வறலிவிடுதாது", "நொண்டி நாடகம்," "அந்நி நாடகம்" முதலான பல நூல்களையும் இயற்றியுள்ளார். வேசி மாயையில் சிக்கித் தகாத பல குற்றங்களைச் செய்து நொண்டியான ஒருவன் தானே தன் கதையைப் பாட்டுகளாக பாடுவதே "நொண்டி நாடகம்" ஆகும். 18ம் நூற்றாண்டில் "நொண்டி நாடகம்" எழுதி அதை பிரபலப்படுத்தியவர் தில்லை விடங்கள் மாரிமுத்தா பிள்ளை யாவார்.

இதே 18 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் வாழ்ந்த அருணாசலக் கவிராயர் இராம நாடகக் கீர்த்தனைகள் பாடிப் புகழ் கொண்டவர் ஆவார். தமிழ்மொழியிலே காலட்சேபத்திற்கு என்றே எழுந்த முதல் இசை நாடக நூல் இவருடைய இராம நாடகக்கீர்த்தனைகள் ஆகும். நாற்பது ராகங்களைப் பயன்படுத்தி 258 கீர்த்தனைகளால் இராம சரித்திரத்தை முழுவதும் நாடகமாக்கித் தமிழிசைக்கு மாபெரும் ஏற்றத்தைத் தந்தவர் அருணாசலக் கவிராயரே ஆவார். அருணாசலக் கவிராயர் இராம நாடகக் கீர்த்தனைக்கு எழுதிய மங்களத்தையே இந்த நூற்றாண்டிலும் பலரும் விரும்பி தம் இசைக் கச்சேரிகளில் மங்களமாகப் பாடிமுடிக்கும் வழக்கத்தையே கொண்டிருந்தனர் என்பது யாரும் மறுக்க முடியாத ஒரு முக்கியமான செய்தியாகும்.

பல்லவி

"ஸ்ரீராமச் சந்திரனுக்கு ஜயமங்களம் நல்ல திவ்விய முகச் சந்திரனுக்கு கபமங்களம் ||

அனுபல்லவி

"மாராமபிரானுக்கு மன்னு பரந்தாமனுக்கு
சுரனு நாமனுக்கு இரவிகுல சோமனுக்கு ||

சரணம்

"கொண்டல்மணி வண்ணனுக்கு மங்களம்
கோசலை குமாரனுக்கு வீரனுக்கு மங்களம்
புண்டரிகத் தாளனுக்குப்
பூச்சக்கிர ஆளனுக்கு

தண்டவைத் தோளனுக்குச்
சானகி மணாளனுக்கு ||

என்ற இந்த மங்களப்பாடல் பல நூற்றாண்டுகளிலும் இடம் பெற்றுப் புகழ் கொண்ட பாடலாகும்.

இவ்வாறு தமிழிசைக்கு 16, 18 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டுகளில் கீர்காழி முத்துத்தாண்டவர், தில்லை விடங்கள் மாரிமுத்தாபிள்ளை, கீர்காழி அருணாசலக் கவிராயர் ஆகிய மூவரும் ஆற்றிய அரும்பணியைப் பாராட்டவே ஆன்றோர்கள் இவர்களை "கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தின் ஆதி மும்மூர்த்திகள்" எனப்போற்றி வருகின்றனர்.

கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தின் மும்மூர்த்திகள் என்று இசையுலகம் இன்று போற்றிவரும் மூவர் தியாகையார், சியாமா சாஸ்திரிகள், முத்துசாமி தீட்சிதர் ஆகியோர் 18 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் பிற்பகுதியில் தோன்றி 19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் முற்பகுதிவரை வாழ்ந்தவர்கள் ஆவர். இவர்கள் பாடிய கீர்த்தனைங்கள் தெலுங்கு, சமஸ்கிருதம் ஆகிய மொழிகளிலேயே அமைந்திருக்கின்றன. இம்மூவரும் இசையுலகிற்கு ஆற்றியுள்ள தொண்டு போற்றுவதற்குரியதே எனினும், 2500 ஆண்டுக் காலங்களாகவே தமிழிசை தொய்வின்றித் தமிழகத்தில் ஏற்றமும் பெருமையும் மிளிரச் சிறப்புப்பெற்றே வழங்கி வந்திருக்கிறது என்பதை எவரும் மறுத்து விட முடியாது.

இந்திய நாட்டின் மிகச்சிறந்த கவிஞராகப் போற்றப்படும் இரவீந்திரநாத் தாகூர் "அனுபவிக்கச் சிறந்தது தாய்மொழியில் உள்ள கவிதையே" என்று குறிப்பிட்டு இருக்கிறார்.

மிகவும் தொன்மையானது என்பதால் தான் தமிழிசையைக் கர்நாடக இசை என்றும் சிலர் அழைக்கக்காண்கிறோம்.

நன்றி : "பொள்ளாச் தமிழிசை சங்கம்
பத்தொன்பதம் ஆண்டு விழா மலர்"